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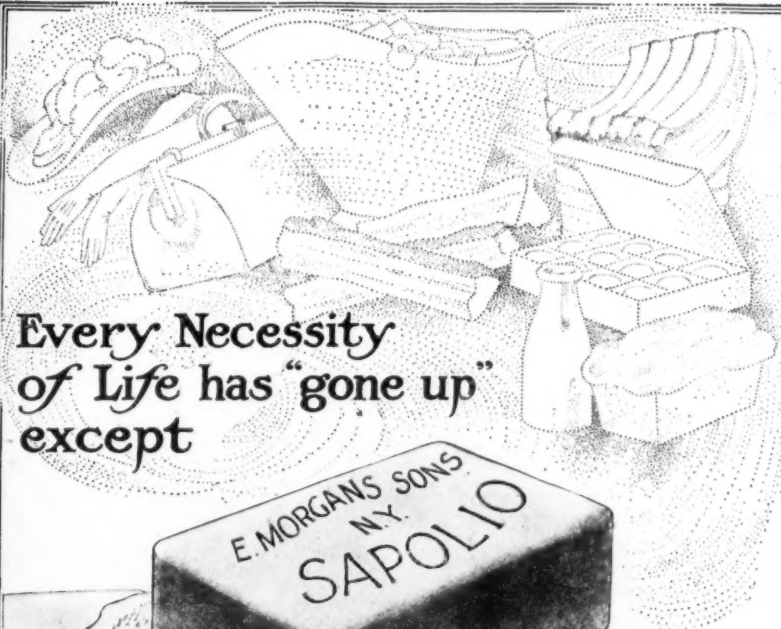
JAN., 1911
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THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS



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EDITOR'S ANNOUNCEMENT

for February Ainslee's

Twelve short stories in a single issue of a magazine is, or ought to be, a pretty good program for those who like to take their fiction in small but frequent doses. And there are very many readers of this class; so many that they have got to be cared for.

That is one reason why we have provided for a round dozen of short stories in AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE for February. And not only that, but that dozen are good stories—every one.

If you have any doubt about it, hear what we have to say about them. First of all, there is a story by

O. HENRY.

To be sure, "*Money Maze*" isn't a new story. It is one that we published in May, 1901. We are reprinting it because a great many of our readers, who read our statement that AINSLEE'S published the first magazine story O. Henry ever wrote, asked to see it. As you know very well, we never did such a thing before, but we have departed from our rule because we thought the circumstances justified it.

Next, there is a story, the beginning of a series, by an author who, though she has had but one tale, hitherto, in AINSLEE'S, nevertheless made a distinct and immediate impression.

MARGARETTA TUTTLE

scored an unprecedented hit with her story, "*The Greatest of These*," in the September number. She is writing now exclusively for AINSLEE'S, and will begin her series in February, with "*The Shadow of the Waste Places*."

These two stories, as different as possible from each other, would, of themselves, give character to any magazine.

We have had any number of letters in praise of the unique cowboy stories by

J. W. MARSHALL,

and there will be another account of Jim and little Sydney, in February, called "*The Assimilation of Paris Green*," a title that is eminently suitable to Mr. Marshall's quaint humor.

The other stories, nine in number, will lend emphasis and point to the indisputable

fact that variety is the spice of magazine fiction, as well as of life. For in them will be found as wide, a range of emotional interest as any one can ask for; and that, after all, is what interests the human heart more than anything else. There will be a few striking love stories, the ever-popular story of the West, and the story with the detective interest. Among the authors of these are: *Elliott Flower, Albert Kinross, Carey Waddell, Fannie Heaslip Lea, Carrington A. Phelps, Jane W. Guthrie, Owen Oliver, and Johnson Morton.*

What will be the two most important features, the complete novel and the serial, have been reserved for notice at the end of the announcement, because it is important that you should know first that there will be twelve short stories.

EDGAR SALTUS

is the author of "*Ropes of Sand*," the complete novel. It is a remarkable story, because Mr. Saltus has made the unusual combination of plot, action, color, change of scene, together with characters of great strength, and profound human interest. Its emotional appeal is unmistakable. Therefore, its success with the readers of the magazine is certain.

The February number will have the second installment of the new serial by

AGNES and EGERTON CASTLE.

"*The Panther's Cub*" is going to be one of the serials of the new year. It began in the January number, and you ought to get the opening chapters, if you have not already seen them.

One other item in the table of contents for February deserves special attention. Every one has been reading *H. Addington Bruce's* articles, "*Adventurings in the Psychical*," which began in September. The topic is important, and the interest in it is growing; scientific psychology has made enormous progress in the past fifteen years, and some extraordinary, even miraculous, facts have been established. One of them is the portentous fact of the subconscious mind. What is known of this is set forth in Mr. Bruce's article, "*The Subconscious*," in the February number.



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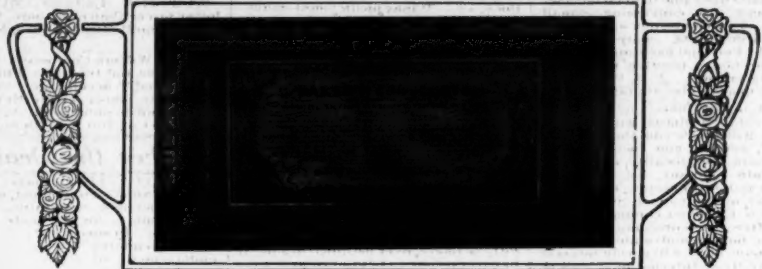
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THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS

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AINSLEE'S

VOL. XXVI.

JANUARY, 1911.

No. 6.



CHAPTER I.

OVER the rocky desert, Sudley and his two companions—for, although the party was eight in number, the servants who rode behind them could by no stretch of solitude be considered such—were pushing on from Kushalguhr.

Mitchell rode carelessly, as was his way to do everything becoming to a man, rolling cigarettes, and growling scraps of song and abuse of India as he smoked. Smith's clear, ruddy face stared out from under the lowered brim of his hat, his shoulders shaking heavily with every motion of the horse. Occasionally he replied to Mitchell's endless flow of commentary. But Sudley rode quite silently, a little in advance of the others, his horse picking his way intelligently along the rude cart road.

It was an odd face, Sudley's. For the alert, meager body of him, and the brown, bony cheeks and chin would have led one to expect a mouth somewhat harshly set and that peculiar quickness of eye that is acquired through years of existence under dangerous conditions. But Sudley's mouth had an unexpected softness and tranquillity, and though the eyes were steadfastly observant there were a pe-

culiar calmness and languor in their depths. He had, as all these men had, looked Death in the face more than once, but this weary placidity of expression had not altered even then. He was no talker, but when he did speak, his voice was an agreeable one to hear, and made one wish he used it oftener.

Far away to their left on the horizon was a faint green speck, which Mitchell had pointed out as Kohat, and had wished vehemently that they were moving in that direction. There were human people there, white women, and the pick of the Punjab regiments, hockey to play, and pegs to drink. And they were moving away from it.

Late in the afternoon, when the speck of green had become invisible, there broke on the interminable line ahead of them the low, irregular outline of the roofs of Dajindar. Sudley saw it before the others, but it was Mitchell who a moment later announced its appearance.

"There's Dajindar the Desolate," he said, hitching in his saddle. "What a hell on earth! Been quiet there longer than usual. Must have given up all hope of even a friendly massacre. These devils have spirit to keep it up! How far beyond is the bungalow?"

"Two or three miles," said Sudley, without turning.

As Dajindar drew nearer and nearer, seemingly more by its own enterprise than theirs, Smith and Mitchell went exhaustively into the subject of tiffin, for they were men to whom food meant much, though quantity was more obtainable in these thoroughly condemned regions than quality or variety.

It was Sudley's horse who put an end to this interesting debate by plunging suddenly, with a sharp snort, and coming to a stand trembling under Sudley's hand. Sudley leaned forward, and passed his hand down over the animal's wither.

"What's amiss?" called Mitchell.

Smith pressed forward.

Sudley was looking intently about them, soothing the startled horse inattentively.

"Some one threw that stone," he said.

Mitchell's pith helmet careened as he spoke, and fell beside him.

"Number two," said Sudley, without moving.

One of the servants ran forward, cowering low to the ground, and picked up the fallen headgear. The others burst into an animated, excited jabbering, crowding together.

"It is probably an overcivilized boy, trying to be English," said Mitchell sourly, as he replaced his hat.

"There must be two of him then," said Sudley. "Topaz was struck on the left shoulder, and your hat fell to the left."

He glanced at the ambiguous walls about them, and started forward again. The others followed closely as they entered the town.

Dajindar the Desolate was of a picturesque ugliness to those unaccustomed to such sights. But it presented no charm to these invaders. No more stones were thrown, but their welcome was limited to a staring curiosity on the part of the numerous children, scowling, dark looks from the men, and derisive if untranslatable jeers from the women folk. Through it all Sudley rode with his impassive patience.

It was three miles, all but an incon-

siderable fraction, from the farther side of Dajindar to the bungalow. A lonelier place might perhaps have been imagined by some one of superlatively morbid tendency, but the average mind could not have conceived a more deserted spot. The long, badly constructed building stood in a patch of unhealthy-looking trees, while the rocks of a dry river bed, the foothills of distant peaks, and the monotonous stretch of desert made up the rest of the picture.

"As a promised land!" said Mitchell despondently.

Sudley had already dismounted, and, stooping, lifted a large, flat stone near one of the trees. He waited until the numberless ants had swarmed away from the sheltered spot before he picked up the rusty key of the bungalow.

"It so pleased Shutters to do it," he said wearily. "I think he had been reading 'The Prince of India.'"

He unlocked the door of the bungalow and went inside, leaving the door standing wide behind him. As a matter of fact, in less time than it took the others to dismount and follow him in, he had all the windows and doors open, moving in his efficient fashion that had no suggestion of haste, and what air there was stirring was doing its best to exorcise the closeness of the place when the others joined him.

Mitchell naturally had begun to prepare a cigarette, strolling toward the table that stood lengthwise in one end of the room. Smith had done little but to find the most comfortable chair. The servants were busily taking occupation of the invisible regions at the rear of the house.

"Letter for you here, Sudley," said Mitchell indistinctly, as he lighted his cigarette.

Sudley came over quietly, and took it from the table. He read it standing.

Smith stirred lazily in the easy-chair, as his servant entered with the drink of whisky he had learned to offer without an order.

"What does Shutters have to say?" he asked. "Get two more of these, idiot."

"He's off to Basloo, poor devil. Says he left the maps in the case, and sent in his report to the major. Also is uneasy about the state of affairs in Dajindar."

"Ah!" said Smith. He had an appearance of great indolence as he stretched his length from the chair, but he was a man whose name was well known to the War Office for valorous and ingenious accomplishment.

"Then the overeducated heathen are——"

"Probably," said Sudley, putting down the letter.

Smith stared at the ceiling in silence. Mitchell frowned at the floor. Two silent, dark men—the only perfect servants in the world—came to arrange the table. Sudley moved aside. The room was very quiet.

"I don't—like—it," said Smith at last very slowly, without changing his attitude.

"I don't like it!" retorted Mitchell, planting his foot on a chair emphatically.

"Don't like what?" asked Sudley.

"Leaving you here with one brown coffee bean of a servant," said Mitchell.

"Leaving you here practically alone," said Smith.

Sudley did not answer. He moved across to the window that gave on Dajindar, and stood looking out.

"You're so damned indifferent," said Smith.

"Except in the matter of getting clean," said Sudley, with one of his annual smiles. He moved away to a near-by door, calling his servant as he went. "I am going to take a bird bath, and will be back for tiffin," he nodded, as he went out.

When he had gone, Mitchell came over to where the lazy one was lounging. "Well?" he said.

"Damn!" said Smith.

"You remember the last time these dogs went mad?"

Smith nodded.

"Look here," said Mitchell, in his absorption throwing his half-smoked cigarette to the floor and grinding it

under his heel, "we can't leave him here."

Smith moved. "We have no choice," he said.

"Theirs but to do and——" Mitchell did not finish the quotation.

"The cursed country from one end to the other isn't worth it," said Smith.

Mitchell like a fool began to roll another cigarette. Suddenly he jerked up his head. "What is it?" he asked.

"What is what?"

"His 'damned indifference.'"

Smith frowned, and drank a long draft from his glass. "A woman?"

"No," said Mitchell.

"Why?"

"I don't know why. But, no."

"Something at home?"

It was Mitchell who frowned. "Something at home," he echoed. "There are two sons ahead of him. He was left to shift for himself."

"Ah!" said Smith. He could say it very well.

The two men did not move again until Sudley returned.

The tiffin was not marred by any mention of the matter that occupied their minds, but later, when the two men with their servants were about to ride on, the cool evening air inviting them in spite of the miasma that was supposed to stalk abroad at that hour, Mitchell drew nearer to Smith again, and spoke to him in a low tone.

"We can't leave him here alone," he said almost passionately. "War Office be cremated. We are only men, after all. It's cowardly."

Smith, to his surprise, laughed. "He is stronger than either of us, Mitch," he said.

"You mean he would put us out of the place?"

"Can you imagine his allowing us to stay?"

"No."

"Then, get on your horse and smoke. We'll make the place during the moonlight."

"I don't care," said Mitchell, meaning that he did. "I'm going to report to Kohat."

"Report then," said Smith. "I'll go halves."

Sudley stood in the doorway watching them as they rode away.

After they had disappeared, he went back into the bungalow. The table had been cleared, and his bed prepared, and the coolie was busy at the punkah, hoping his present industriousness would balance his future neglect.

Sudley got out the maps, and spread them on the table. It wasn't glorious warfare that claimed their health and their lives. There were no drums and trumpets to urge them on. Solitary marches, and obscure dangers, just for a word on a map—that was their destiny.

From Dajindar came the interminable beat of the drums. The air had grown still and sultry. Sudley threw off his coat, and settled into his chair. He had to fill the inkwell from the bottle near it, and find an unused pen, and then he settled down to drawing up his report. The night wore on.

Suddenly a cry came, a mere echo of a scream, across the desert between him and the town. He dropped his pen and found himself upon his feet, passing his hands over his eyes. The cry rang in his ears.

"It was white!" he said drunkenly. "It was white!"

Presently he sank back into his chair.

"Impossible," he said more slowly. "It startled me. God! But how should a white creature be in this hole? Where is that cursed pen?"

He pushed his shirt sleeve above the elbow, and plunged again into his work.

Just for a word on a map! There were poor Shutters risking the cholera at Basloo, Mitchell and Smith fagging on in the night wearily, other men toiling, sweating, swearing, starving, thirsting, suffering, and dying, he himself with a raging Indian headache settling down in the shadow of fermenting Dajindar. All for a word or two on a map!

The hours toiled by, and the pages of his report added themselves together. At last he laid down the pen and leaned back wearily, regaining

slowly his consciousness of his surroundings. The room was quite dark, save at his end of it where the lamps burned none too brightly.

The sounds to which during his recent absorption he had been dead became audible again—the drum-beat in Dajindar and a murmuring. He stretched his legs far under the table, and filled his pipe again for one last bowlful before he turned in. The murmuring was an odd thing—it was not continuous, but broken by a more or less rhythmic pause. His hand reached toward the matches, and then stopped in mid-air. His head went up a trifle, and his eyes narrowed. Slowly his two hands relinquished their intention, and rested on the table ledge, slowly he rose to his feet.

The murmur had at last penetrated his consciousness, and he recognized it. Some one was moaning. It was a faint, lifeless, regular, pathetic sound. Sudley was on the moment broad awake and alert.

Out in the night he stopped to listen and to locate the sound; then he ran stumbling down the road toward Dajindar the Desolate.

CHAPTER II.

"Jhundra!" shouted Sudley. "Jhundra!" He kicked the door wider as he entered with his burden, and a sleepy voice answered him.

"Jhundra!"

A shadowy figure appeared at the doorway near the bed. "Master?" said the servant thickly.

"Bring the lamp down here quickly."

In the semidarkness, he carefully threaded his way between the chairs and boxes. The drowsy servant crossed the room and brought the lamp, just as Sudley stooped over the bed and laid down his burden. The faint, regular moaning continued uninterrupted.

"Master, it is a woman!" exclaimed Jhundra.

"It is a white woman," said Sudley. "That cry— Great God, they have begun!"

Jhundra, as fully awake as his master, had bent over the inert body. Her clothing was torn and dirty, her hair hung in a tangled mass, there was blood on her face and arms. But Jhundra, who had acquired, Heaven knows when and how, a curiously simple and intuitive working knowledge of the human frame, had not paused to consider these superficial aspects. On one knee beside the bed, his rapid, flexile fingers worked over each bone and muscle, drawing his breath audibly, and murmuring disjointed and unintelligible comments.

Sudley stood by silently, staring at the poor, misused creature. In spite of the stains upon the cheeks and the distortion of the moaning mouth, he could see that there had been much beauty in the face. But his thoughts had flown to the impulse behind this act, and there was a deep furrow between his brows. He had relinquished his late burden wholly to Jhundra, whose simple skill he knew, but the future menace and responsibility weighed him down.

Jhundra turned at last, his face drawn into an expression of fear and pity mingled. "Master," he said, almost in a whisper, "there is a child."

Sudley's heart swelled painfully, but he could not move.

"The woman will probably die," said Jhundra, as ever on his knees, his eyes upon his master.

"We must do what we can," said Sudley, with stiff lips.

The long night of horrors wore along miserably. The soft moans, like those of a despairing animal, had given place at times to terrible, convulsive cries, and Jhundra had ministered to the poor, racked frame as if, like Briareus, he had one hundred hands. Under his directions, which even in the hours of their greatest anxiety never forgot their Oriental humility, Sudley worked like one possessed.

The faint dawn shone in at the windows upon the writhing sufferer, the worn-out nurses, the disordered room. As the light strengthened, Jhundra, in his omnipresent fashion, handed

Sudley a large peg of whisky, and went on, as if without interruption, cradling the woman in his untiring arms. As Sudley put down the empty glass, Jhundra spoke without turning.

"Master may go and rest—the worst is finished. Give the magic tablets of sleep to Jhundra, and he will give rest to the woman also."

Sudley handed him the morphia in silence, and, turning away, flung himself into the long chair. From the direction of Dajindar came no sound. But even in that stillness, as Jhundra silently laved and bandaged the sleeping woman and arranged the disordered room, Sudley could not sleep. As Jhundra returned to sit by the foot of the bed with characteristic patience, Sudley turned and looked at him.

"I am sorry, little servant of the needy," he said, with kindly weariness. "There is no rest for Jhundra this side of Kohat."

The Hindoo rose without a murmur. "It is an order."

The man spread out his hands, and bent his head. "The major at Kohat?"

"Yes, and swiftly."

"Jhundra will be there before a dog stirs in Dajindar, master."

He made his obeisance again and disappeared. It was barely five minutes before the indefatigable creature was on his way, yet in that space he had redressed, and begun the preparation for Sudley's breakfast. Sudley's own horse he led out into the sunshine. Only the swiftest of foot could be trusted with such a message. There was no roadway that skirted Dajindar the Desolate, and he must not ride through the town.

Sudley fell asleep at last in an exhaustion. The drugged sufferer on his bed made no sound or movement. Far away in the desert of boulders, Jhundra made his way back to the road, and galloped toward Kohat, his wistful eyes denying sleep and staring at the sun to make sure he did not drowse.

When Sudley did awake, he stretched his arms above his head, and wondered why he had elected to eschew a bed at least more comfortable than the bam-

boo chair. But, in turning, he remembered clearly enough.

She was hardly the same woman. Under Jhundra's hands, her hair had been smoothed into two plaits, rippling down from a part over her white forehead in softly glinting gold. Her face had still the ugly bruises that made Sudley's hands clench with the rage of the white man, but the dirt that had been thrown at her and through which she had dragged her fainting body was gone, and the fairness of the skin showed pale against the unbleached linen of the bed. The mystery of her presence in this place was indeed a deep one.

His hands in his pockets, he stood regarding her. Whoever she was that had been the first victim of these devils, her revenge would come soon and heavily along the road from Kohat. As he stood so for a moment, looking at her gravely and pityingly, her eyes unclosed slowly. Sudley flushed, though with what cause for discomfort he could not say. Her eyes, as blue and wide as a little child's, stared at him reflectively. There was no surprise in them and no questioning. Sudley came forward, and stood near her.

"You must lie quite still," he said quietly. "You are very tired, you know, and sick. And we are going to take good care of you."

She turned her head to look at him more directly, and, after a moment, to his surprise, she calmly smiled at him.

"I wonder," said Sudley, "if you ought to have some coffee, or some tea, or something. Jhundra has gone, Jhundra knows everything, and I know nothing." He stood quite at her bedside now. "I don't want to bother you at all, you know. But if there is any one you want me to send for, some of your people who will be anxious——"

She lay looking at him as ever, smiling placidly. "I want some water," she said at last faintly.

Sudley turned without answering, and went out. It was little he knew about this sort of thing, but the blank childishness of her eyes and smile troubled him. Perhaps when the

morphia wore off she would be different, and would tell him who she was and how she came to be in this hell-hole.

She was asleep again when he returned with the water, and the coolie was standing behind his chair regarding the breakfast service consideringly. Sudley sat down with a grateful sigh, but he watched the woman continually. She slept until nearly noon, when she woke again, turning on her pillow to look about the room. When her eyes met Sudley's she paused as before, and then slowly smiled. He smiled, too, and laid away his pipe.

"Are you feeling better?" he said softly.

"I am sick," she answered. Her mouth drooped at the corners like a child about to cry, and Sudley experienced a moment of hideous panic, worse than any he had endured during hours of serious menace. But after an instant of suspense, she smiled again a bit wanly.

"I wish Jhundra would come back," said Sudley, hardly aware that he spoke aloud.

"Who is Jhundra?" she asked, after a pause. Her voice was very weak, but of a natural sweetness.

"He is my servant."

She lay looking at him. "Who are you?" she said placidly.

"Temple Sudley, at your service," he answered, smiling. "Don't you think you might tell me who you are, now?"

She did not answer this question, but after another pause she put one of her own: "Are you sleepy?"

He shook his head.

"I am," she said. She smiled again, and closed her eyes.

He stood motionlessly, waiting until her deeper breathing assured him she had fallen asleep again. He waited even then a few moments longer, and then went softly out into the air.

The interminable "tom-tom" came as ever from the direction of Dajindar. Only to their ignorance of his presence at the bungalow could be attributed the fact of their not having already molested him. But various groups of

men in all directions, looking like patches of shadow moving about over the rocks, were unquestionably searching parties, undoubtedly, he told himself, looking for the woman now sleeping in his hut. They would reach his place. It was only a question of time. He turned on his heel and went indoors.

The clicking of his pistols as he examined them aroused her. As before, she showed no surprise in his occupation, but stared at him with all the unintelligence of a baby. He nodded and smiled encouragingly, but he was too busy to go to her.

He had laid down the revolvers, and was going over the rifles in the rack, when a faint sound made him look up. There was a face at the window, a dark Afridi face. The man was visible to the belt of his sheepskin coat, and Sudley could see the bone handle of the four-foot knife thrust through the leather.

It was an instantaneous view of the spy that he had, for just as he raised his head the man disappeared. Sudley threw one look at the woman lying staring at the wall; then he caught up the pistols and went to the door. Running with the incredible swiftness and agility of his kind, the Afridi was bending low, avoiding the larger rocks with serpentine ease. Sudley took aim, and fired. The bullet chipped the rock nearest the fugitive.

The second bullet caught him in the shoulder just as he dropped for protection behind the boulder. Sudley heard his sharp cry of fury, and stood waiting. A long, wary silence drifted past him with the smoke of his charge. But Sudley had learned patience, and made no move.

The report barked again a few moments later as he caught sight of the Afridi's head beyond a third boulder. The creature was making his way from the shelter of one rock to another, on both knees and one arm. This time the head went down, and Sudley knew it would not lift itself again, nor would any more messages be carried by those lips, pressing the stony face of nature

in a last kiss. It was a reprieve, and a short one. God only knew what would be the result of those echoing shots in Dajindar. But he walked calmly forward, and found his quarry. It was the knife he wanted.

The sun was going down as he turned back. The jagged hills were reddened in the glow, and the implacable face of the wilderness was softened. It was curiously quiet in Dajindar. All sounds had ceased, and all stirring life seemed to have vanished.

He walked softly into the bungalow, and looked at the woman. She was really little more than a girl, not over twenty probably. Who on earth was she, and what in the desert was he to do with her? What was going to happen during the night? And where was Jhundra? These were a few of the questions he asked himself as he stood fingering the long knife.

The coolie appeared at the door of the inner room, and suggested that he prepare a little food. The serenity of his sallow face was unmarred by any token that he had heard or trembled at the sound of the shots. Sudley nodded, and put the knife down.

He had finished his excellent fare, and was smoking his pipe comfortably in the bamboo chair, when a faint, far-away shot from the hills tensed his listening sense again. Every nerve and cord in his body seemed to stiffen. Three or four shots more sounded in the distance, and then silence.

Sudley took up his glasses, and went out again, and walked around the bungalow, peering through the transfiguring light of the sunset at the wretched desolation of the place.

He turned the glasses toward Kohat, sweeping slowly up the boulder-strewn ravine. Suddenly he caught his breath, and leaned forward, twisting the screw of the binocular with lean, brown fingers that almost trembled. Through the lenses, as miraculous an aid as seven-league boots, he riveted his eyes upon a moving spot. A riderless horse, with a low-hanging, dejected head, was slowly coming nearer. At every step, the head gave a quick, hurtful droop.

"Lame," said Sudley between his teeth. "Jhundra—poor devil!"

A sharp suspicion pinged into his brain like the impact of a murderous bullet. He raised and lowered the glasses, minutely inspecting the faces of the hills. Lame or no, such a horse as Topaz would not go begging for a master; that he knew. Something like a handful of dark lizards were moving down toward the ravine far below him.

Sudley reverted to asterisk English. But for the sick woman who needed him, he would have gone to the certain death that would have followed his attempted rescue of his favorite horse. He did not speak again, but his jaw set hard, and the softness and gentleness of his mouth disappeared as it would never have done for any danger of his own.

The handful of lizards moved down, now slowly, now rapidly. Sudley ground his teeth, and the palms of his hands moistened. The scene was now so clear to him that he felt himself near it, part of it, and standing inertly like a coward.

Then to his amazement the horse began to trot, in a painful, shambling fashion. Had the creature intelligence enough to see the danger? The limping trot broke into an agonized gallop, skirting the border of the river bed where the stony way was less impassible. Instead of slackening the hurtful pace, as would have been the case had the animal been merely startled, the long, sturdy frame stretched itself into a hunted race, stumbling among the stones and gathering its spent forces again and again in a thrilling heroism that made Sudley's heart ache.

The moving patch of Afridis had given up the chase. They were scattering into hidden crevasses of the rocks, intent, it appeared, on other matters.

But Sudley gave an exultant shout. The fluttering, treacherous end of a drapery hastily drawn close showed for one instant on the far side of the laboring horse. Only for one instant and then disappeared. Sudley could have gone on shouting like a boy at a ball game.

"Jhundra!" he said, and his voice was shaking. "Jhundra, God bless his black skin!"

He lowered the glasses, and the figure of Topaz seemed withdrawn to an immeasurable distance. But Sudley drew a deep breath—something of inestimable worth seemed to have been given back to him from the inmost circle of hell.

Sudley, overborne in his anxiety and curiosity by his naturally poignant sense of responsibility, was in the bungalow, bending over the woman, and trying to strike some spark of intelligence from her eyes by his questions, when Jhundra came in.

He was an ugly object, Jhundra. Dirt and sweat had disfigured his face, lying deepest in the lines of fatigue. He was stiff in his gait, and his hand was browned in a new shade where the blood from an irritating flesh wound had dried upon it. His hair was matted and blown, by his bodily heat and the no less suffocating air of the wilderness, and his eyelids were heavy with sleep and disgust. But in the eyes, unchanged, burned his devotion to the master, his exultance over enemies outdone, and his satisfaction at the result of his risky labor.

"It was written, master. It is the will of God. They come. I go to the horse."

The room had grown dim in the evening shadows. Sudley walked across and laid his hand on the man's shoulder.

"It shall not be forgotten, Jhundra," he said.

Jhundra salaamed as only the triumphant may do. "The hills are giving birth to devils, master. The town is empty. They will meet it. The horse is hanging by his breath." He straightened and glanced toward the bed. "The woman?" he asked gently.

"The woman knows nothing. She breathes and looks, but that is all."

Jhundra closed his hand over his wounded fingers. "I begged food of a woman in the way," he said. "But Jhundra paid. Master, while there are

women, men will live. She told me somewhat of the woman there."

Sudley's hand closed tighter on the servant's shoulder.

"Her name? How was it that——"

"Her name is not for us, master. It was Markhund Khalat—the master knows?"

"I have heard."

"He was a man, master. I saw him once. Straight and high as a tree, knowing no law, no resting. She saw him, so the woman said in Peshawar, and went away with him. While there are women, men cannot walk alone, master."

"And is that all?"

"All, all, master. I go to the horse."

The room was darker when he turned back. He would take another look at her, and then go to help the wearied man in his unselfish care of the overspent animal. But as he reached her bedside, to his horrified amazement, she sat up and gave a piercing call.

"Khund!" she cried. "Khund!" Her hands raised and twisted in her hair, disordering the smooth plaits. "Look! Look!" she whispered. One of her tremulous hands pointed into the darkness. "Look! Look!"

It was a fearful word, hanging in the stillness of the room with supernatural resonance. Sudley almost glanced about under the insistence of the tone. She drew back her hand, and, clasp- ing her fingers over her eyes, rocked her body.

"Khund! Khund!" she moaned.

Sudley looked at her in despair. Again she raised herself a little and gave the cry.

"Look! Look!" she whispered, pointing into the darkness.

Then Jhundra, the omnipresent, re- turned. He passed Sudley like a shadow, and knelt beside the bed.

"Look! Look!" said the woman, and covered her face with her hands, moaning.

Jhundra circled her with his arms, and spoke to her softly, caressingly. The mellifluous cadences of his voice rippled on unheeded for some mo- ments. Straightening in his arms, she

called again, and sank back with the terrible: "Look! Look!"

Sudley bit his lips, but Jhundra bent nearer to her.

"You call me," he said, with fero- cious distinctness. "I am here. I am here. Am I not Markhund Khalat?"

The woman trembled, shuddering, but her hands fell heavily upon the bed- clothes. She turned her tortured eyes to his.

"Khund?" she breathed.

"Lie softly, little one. Am I not here? The dream is gone. See, I am sound and well. Sleep, rose of all heaven. Aditi, my world and my sky. Lay your head here where my arm lies, and know that it is strong, and that its strength is yours, Aditi; yours."

She relaxed slowly, and as slowly smiled. Her poor, bruised face turned upon his shoulder, and her eyes closed.

"Khund," she said happily.

Sudley waited until the man skillfully withdrew his arm, and rose with a sigh. "It was the hour," said Jhundra.

Sudley's comprehension was slower. "The hour?"

"It will probably be so every day at this hour. We must watch, master."

"But how did you know the way to quiet her?"

The Hindoo looked at him half quiz- zically, half pityingly, and withal as if he wondered how these men became conquerors of men.

"It is a simple thing," he said. "I go again to the horse, master."

He was back at the side of the other sufferer when Sudley sought him out. Sudley was booted and spurred, his pis- tols were in his belt, also a long knife that Jhundra had never seen before, but guessed imperturbably how it came to be there. His long, slender rifle was under his arm, and his hat sat firmly on his head.

"Saddle me the other horse, Jhun- dra," he said. "I will bathe the poor devil while you attend to that. So, Topaz; so, my girl." The horse nosed at him wearily as he petted her.

"Master, the fleet of foot is too sad to go."

"I am not riding Topaz, Jhundra. You rode my horse, now I ride yours."

"But the master does not go alone?"

Sudley nodded as he bent down to swab the lame foreleg of his pet.

"And Jhundra?"

"Jhundra stays with—Aditi," said Sudley, adopting the name his questioner had himself bestowed upon the girl.

Jhundra lifted his arms to their length. "It is an order," he protested.

"Yes," Sudley answered, without looking up.

When Sudley swung into the saddle, he turned to the waiting man.

"It shall not be forgotten, Jhundra, what you have done. But now you must do even more. If I do not come back, remember to care for poor little Aditi as you would care for me."

"The master is my father and my mother," said the faithful one.

"There are rifles in there—and no one knows better than Jhundra how to use them. If they come too fast for you, those devils, if they come within the house, near her, you must shoot her; do you understand?"

"She is white," said Jhundra, and his brows wrinkled like a dog's as he glanced up at his master in the darkness. "The master goes to meet the men from Kohat?"

"They must not come down the lower pass," said Sudley. "Good-by, Jhundra. Be faithful."

"Parmeshwar guard you, master," said the poor creature who loved him. And Sudley rode out from his sight. "The master does not seem to care," mused Jhundra. "Doubtless he knows what things are written."

CHAPTER III.

Sudley's ride to meet the men from Kohat was quite characteristic. Through the emasculated town he went, not boldly, but indifferently, knowing that no nervous precaution could deflect a well-thrown knife or a cunning bullet. It might be that he would have to die before he could advise them of the ambushade, but that

was not his affair. Dying was largely a matter of temperament.

Because all the men were in the hills he knew he had chosen the safest path. Moreover, it was more expeditious. The road was comparatively easy, leaving—although this horse was by no means as trustworthy as Topaz—him free to consider the problem at the bungalow. Jhundra would either successfully defend the woman or kill her, and which might occur was on the lap of the gods. But in case he should return, alive, himself, to find her still alive, there would be a situation confronting him that he could not so indifferently drop into the skirts of any deity.

First of all, it would be his duty to try to find out who she was. Undoubtedly she was an American, for her accent in speaking was not English for all its soft prettiness. Peshawar might give up a clue, but there was little time for that sort of inquiry. He could not himself care for her for more than two weeks, since at the expiration of that time he was to move on over the mountains.

There was no sentence of death for Sudley lying on the knees of the gods that day. He met the regiment halfway between Kohat and Dajindar, and turned them from the lower pass. It was in the chill, thin dawn that he greeted them. They were amazed at his presence, and one enthusiastic subaltern came up with the inevitable desire to shake hands. For it was a brave thing that Sudley had done, as every one knew, except himself. He winced a little in the face of their feeling, knowing that their admiration was three parts misunderstanding. The same deed by any one of these men would have been intertwined with memories and hopes and apprehensions, centring around some beloved figure—mother, father, or sweetheart, or wife. As for him, he rode unencumbered. He had never been loved, and had loved no one in the way that meant one backward glance. It was very little for him to face death, where for another man it might mean much.

He fell in beside the major, as they

set forward again. And in his monosyllabic fashion he told of Shutters' prognostication, of their reception, of the fate of the initial victim, and of the return of Jhundra.

"It will not be serious," said the major. "It has not gone far enough. But without the presence of Gray Betty there, it might have gone hard with you. It's a curious story, this, about the woman."

Sudley was not an easy man to talk with, for his silences were long and frequent. But the major was fairly well tired, being disturbed in his early afternoon nap and having had no sleep since. So the two were quite content to ride together without speaking.

It was broad morning when the major drew rein. Dajindar the Desolate lay before them, its half-barren fields of meager grain spreading toward them piteously like pleading hands stretched out to emphasize their defenseless weakness.

But the frontier policy knew no softening under such eloquence. The major turned in his saddle, and gave an order. The handful of infantry and artillery, with Gray Betty lumbering in their midst, came to stand. Men went hither and yon, while the major sat gnawing his gray mustache.

"You were about here when the stones struck you, Sudley?"

"About forty rods farther on."

A few moments later the smoldering smoke of burning crops thickened the air. Warm, yellow flame surged up, adding to the intense heat. The beaters ran lightly along the edges of the tilled fields, keeping back the destructive element. A low, wailing cry broke from the women of Dajindar, echoed by the tumult of the terrified children.

This was the first lesson. It was always so. If when the grain was consumed, the rebels still refused to capitulate, the second lesson showed them the folly of resisting a stronger force. Their houses, every wall in the town would go next, and then, if their naturally independent desires had not turned cold in defeat, Gray Betty would be trained upon the shelterless.

But it was true, as the major had said; the uprising dwindled into a half-hearted religious frenzy, which expended itself in the crucifixion of a wandering beggar, and a severe two days' endurance test of dancing and shrilling and fasting. But all that did not restore the lost grain, and with a more compulsory starvation staring it in the face, Dajindar came to terms.

Captain Driscoll and a dozen men were going to stay with Gray Betty just long enough to see to it that the lesson given sank deep into the covering hearts of the overborne natives, and the rest were going back to Kohat without a scratch.

Mrs. Dunstan and Mrs. Driscoll rode down with an escort, and had many things to say in high, clear, gentle voices of the dance that had been missed and the general disturbance of their plans that had followed upon the depletion of Kohat.

Sudley went to them, in his usual direct fashion, with the story of the sufferer at his bungalow, and his request that they would take her to Kohat, and care for her. In his unlearned-of-woman way he was not aware that had he approached one singly she would have acquiesced, if but to please him. For Sudley's good looks and his record had laid him open to the subtlety of womankind. But, to his great misfortune, he came upon them together, and their shrill laughter had caught at his nerves. Well, really, her story and her being at his bungalow—

Sudley started, put down the cup he was holding, and, with his face at a full flush, made his parting bow.

"I will see that she is cared for," he said steadily. "I regret my intrusion. Good afternoon!"

And as he bowed himself out of the major's tent, there were two women who sat vaguely sipping their tea and wishing they had not done as they did.

So it was, during the preparations for departure, that Sudley rode again into camp, nodding and saluting as the rank of his encounter demanded. But he did not dismount until he reached the chaplain's tent. This domicile, like

many others, was partially struck, and the chaplain himself, cheerful in the fact that he had not been called upon to perform his most mournful duty during the entire expedition, was standing by in the blazing sunlight.

"Good morning, Sudley," he called, pushing up his helmet. His throaty Scotch voice was replete with kindness. "This was a nice bloodless mission you brought us on, my lad. Have we finished it to your satisfaction?"

"Your work is not yet done," returned the other, half smiling. "Could you ride with me to the bungalow?"

The chaplain eyed him a moment. "Is the girl dead?" he asked softly.

"No," said Sudley, and for an instant turned away his eyes. "No," he repeated.

He had gone into the story in detail with Major Dunstan and Captain Driscoll, had failed to elicit a spark of a clue from them, and with their wives had had it forcibly borne in upon him that the poor, witless creature who needed unadulterated kindness and sympathy could get neither of these under the care of Mrs. Dunstan or Mrs. Driscoll. He did not feel equal at the moment to going over the facts of the situation again, and doubtless the chaplain knew.

"I wish you would ride over, either with me now, or as soon as you can arrange it. After you go, it might be hard to find an authority of equal standing." His eyes smiled, though his lean face remained grave. "I want you to marry us," he said quietly.

The Scotchman caught his breath desperately. "Marry you!" he echoed. "Man, are you fey?"

Sudley shook his head. "Come over when you can," he said, "won't you? I'll ride back now and try to explain to her."

He made a slight movement in the saddle as he spoke, and Topaz, seemingly of one will with his, started away.

It was now one week since she had come, this poor little Aditi, dragging her tortured, wounded body along the rocks of the so-called road. Jhundra

had washed her garments, and dressed her, and she was sitting up in the bamboo chair, albeit stiffly, for the bandages were still about her.

The blank childishness of her mind and bearing never altered except at "the hour," when every day, with the precision of clockwork, the paroxysm seized her. They had learned to wait for it now, and Jhundra would creep into the room and sit motionless in the doorway until the first piercing cry of "Khund! Khund!" would bring him to her side. The doctor from Kohat had seen her, and pronounced her probable doom—her mind in all likelihood would never regain its womanliness or its memory. She would always be a child mentally, and, while the paroxysms might become less and less frequent as the disordered tissue strengthened, they might continue at intervals for several years.

Sudley faced the matter as he sat smoking after the doctor had gone. It had never mattered to him—not since the long-ago boyhood before he had realized how unwelcome and unnecessary an encumbrance he was to his family—what became of him. He had never been considered, and so had ceased to consider himself of any importance.

Out here, buried in the map of India, with nothing to accomplish before he died except the gleanings of a few names and surveys, he seemed to matter even less. The girl, so isolated, so outcast, so unable to fend for herself, needed but his name and the position of wifehood, nominal as it might be, to make her existence possible. As Mrs. Sudley he could leave her under the protection of the English flag in any place, and leave her secure in the knowledge that she would be cared for in every way.

It was nothing for him to do. He had never even dreamed of having a home as other men might have. The work in which he was engaged would make it impossible, and, even though he could resign at any time now and go whither he listed, he had no other desire but to keep on until the end.

He came back to the bungalow, called Jhundra to take Topaz, and went in to find her. She was lying in the long chair wearily, but her thin fingers were busy with a page of paper and a small pair of scissors from his kit, cutting long strings of awkward dolls.

She looked up as he came in, and there was the usual blank pause in her face before she finally smiled at him. He drew a chair near her and sat down.

"Aditi," he said.

She folded another strip of paper, and did not answer.

"Aditi, I am going away very soon." She looked up at him an instant, and hunted about in her lap for the little scissors. "I can't take you where I am going, and I can't leave you here. So I must send you where there will be kind people to take care of you—do you understand, Aditi?"

It was palpable that she had not understood, had not even been paying attention to what he said, but she glanced up again from her absorbing occupation and nodded mechanically.

"You poor child!" he said very softly. He watched the round head and extended arms of the paper doll grow under her abortive strokes of the scissors, and then he spoke to her again. "Before you can go away to these kind people, you must have a name. Every little thing in the world must have a name, even dolls, Aditi. And because we don't know what your name used to be, we are going to give you a new one. I am going to give you mine, if you will take it. Will you?"

She was silent a moment, spreading out the paper. Then she nodded again.

"Your name will be Mrs. Temple Sudley," he said, laying his hand on hers to hold her attention. "I want you to learn it and be sure not to forget it. Will you say it now, after me? Say it, Aditi. 'Mrs. Temple Sudley.'"

Her brows furrowed in perplexity as she watched his lips.

"Mrs. Temple Sudley," he repeated.

"Mrs. Temple Sudley," she echoed obediently.

He sighed, and withdrew his hand as her eyes went back to her dolls.

When the chaplain came, he took Sudley aside and began to pour forth the accumulated protests that he had collected since Sudley's amazing intention had been sprung upon him. There was his family to be thought of. Sudley faced that idea with considerable calm. There was the woman's past position to be thought of. That remark brought a flash from the indifferent eyes and a lift to the browned chin, and the chaplain left the matter there. But his own future, what of that? Whatever of it, it caused nothing but a flicker of a smile in Sudley's face, a mere fleeting expression, eloquent if brief.

The last consideration of all was the woman's mental condition. Unable as she was to understand the ceremony, it could not be considered valid in the strict sense of the word. Sudley answered this.

"She must be protected and cared for, and this is the only way," he said. "The more incapacitated she is to understand the danger in which she stands, the more reason why I should act for her. The man is dead, and she is helpless. I shall always care for her as I should a child. I simply ask for the indisputable title to see that she meets with no further disgrace and harm. That is the sole position I shall fill in her life."

It was a good deal for him to say, and he had nothing to add to it. He turned toward Aditi's chair and woke her gently.

"The man has come to give you my name," he said. "You remember, don't you, what I told you?"

But the poor, wide-blue eyes were quite innocent of any understanding as they turned to his.

The chaplain, uneasy and distracted with pity, bade him ask her to rise; and Sudley lifted her in his arms and held her erect during the service. She gave her consent to their marriage in a faint, sweet voice, as Sudley dictated, watching the figures of Jhundra and the coolie in the doorway. Sudley laid her gently on the bed when it was finished.

The chaplain sat at the desk writing

his acknowledgment of their marriage, and Sudley filled his pipe. The coolie and the Hindoo put their marks upon the paper when it was finished. Sudley folded it small, and wrote his name on the outside, and then he crossed the room to where the woman lay.

As he stood looking down at her, Jhundra came forward, taking from about his shoulders a fanciful iron chain. There was a triangular, thick pendant, set with wrought pieces of turquoise, hanging from it.

"Master," he said, proffering it.

Sudley looked at it, and then put out his hand. The top of the pendant pulled out like a sword from a scabbard, and within lay a fragment of a blessing and a prayer. He pushed the certificate within, and closed it, and, lifting her head, put the chain about her neck. She was fast asleep. And from Jhundra she had received her only wedding gift.

Sudley walked with the chaplain to the door, and watched him mount.

"When you hear of my death, will you be good enough to see that she is not abandoned?" he asked calmly.

"It is all a very strange thing," said the Scotchman, half sourly, half in admiration. "But you are a good man, if a foolish one, and I will do my best."

"So will I," said Sudley, and he saluted gravely.

She slept all the afternoon, and only wakened when Jhundra came noiselessly in to feed her. The paroxysm that invariably wrenched her emaciated body shortly after sunset so wearied her that they found it inexpedient to give her nourishment later in the evening. Sudley was seated at his desk, but he was not writing. He watched the silent Hindoo arouse the woman with all the gentleness of a mother, and the persuasive smiles with which he besought her to eat.

Sudley watched them some moments after they had passed again from his consciousness, and then he suddenly pulled a page of paper toward him and began hurriedly to write.

Little as they had ever regarded him

in his difficult, loveless career, there were people who were entitled to know of the step he had taken. As he wrote the words, "My dear mother," there surged into his mind the picture of the beautiful old place at St.-Nicholas-at-Wade, the sea, and the trees, and the old house. These things had given him more sense of home and tenderness than the woman to whom he wrote. He had never judged her for her weak submission to his elder brothers; they were strong, and one of them was the bearer of the title, and she had no choice.

He had been a posthumous child, shadowed perhaps by the bereavement the woman had suffered, and had come into a portion that was so begrudged him he had preferred to let it lie. The girls were unattractive, and unfeminine, and the brothers had made his life unendurable. Yet they had a right to know.

It was little he told them—merely that he was married, that he hoped they all were well. But, short as the letter was, he had not finished it when the sounds of a horse cantering up to the door made him lay down his pen and rise. Jhundra was still occupied with the woman, and he bade him stay.

"I will go myself," he said.

It was the chaplain's orderly with a dispatch—a young, stalwart, smiling fellow, swinging off his horse as freshly as if he had not been all day in the saddle.

"It came an hour or so ago," he explained, "down from Kohat, but I couldn't get it over, what with the regiment going back and all that."

Sudley took it, and thanked him. "Have a peg?" he asked as he tore open the envelope.

"Thanks, no," said the orderly. "I don't take it—promised my mother, and all that sort of rot." He flushed as he said it, and rode away again quickly.

"Promised my mother," said Sudley slowly.

Then he took the dispatch out from its wrapping, and stared at it. It was not the length that paralyzed him, for the words were few enough. It wasn't grief, for the men had meant little to

him in his life. He felt numb and stricken with a great change.

Brothers both killed. Home immediately.
BENSON.

That was all. The paper lowered in his hand, and he stared forward at the setting sun. Then suddenly a cry came from within.

"Khund! Khund!" screamed a voice. And then the whisper came: "Look! Look!"

CHAPTER IV.

It is one thing to have become imbued with the idea that one's self and one's future are of no importance to any human being, "number one" included, and then quite another to be brought up with a sharp turn, somewhat after thirty years, to the unexpected bars of mattering very much to several people. Sudley, although he had had time to adjust himself, found himself in London quite as unable to realize his cataclysmic importance as he had been in the little bungalow near Dajindar the Desolate.

The deferential lawyer, who had been so callously unconcerned after him in the past, did his best to bow and scrape Sudley into the comprehension of his new value. But Sudley did not even recognize the bald fact that he was being spoken to, when he was addressed as "my lord."

He seemed mildly surprised at the deference shown him by the railway guard, being totally oblivious to the heroic and successful efforts of Mr. Benson to impress his lordship's importance upon that overhurried individual. He did not even hear Benson's regrets that he should have to submit to the presence of others in his compartment, and in every way proved himself quite incapable of taking in his aggrandizement.

Having mildly, if positively, refused the officious offer of companionship on his journey home—home!—he settled himself inconspicuously in his corner, as if he were glad the fuss was over,

although he had no idea what it was all about. Traveling alone in a compartment meant about as much to him as dining alone in a restaurant. Accustomed, in the carriages of India, to close companionship with beggars and priests and spies, he was not one to be annoyed by the presence of a gentleman and two ladies of well-bred appearance, who sat near the opposite windows.

As the train drew out of the station, he watched the window, and meditated. He had much to think of. Occasionally the details of the accident, as Benson had given them, flitted through his intelligence, but no more than indistinctly to make him marvel at the destruction of two able-bodied men in a motor boat.

Sometimes he considered his finished labor in India as an elderly author might absently let his eyes wander along the half yard of books on his shelves that represented his personal output.

After a long fallowness of mind, merely receiving impressions of passing fields, bridges, and towns, he would fleetingly recall the night in Dajindar when he had found the woman who was now his wife; or memory, casting a longer line, would hook for an instant some flashing retrospect of the place to which he was returning, which would almost immediately wiggle loose and plop back into the lethal waters.

He was disturbed in this absolute lack of occupation by being addressed in a pleasant, boyish voice, whose decorous subduing to fit the import of the communication betrayed some kindly nervousness.

"I dare say you don't remember me. I'm Vernon Halstead, you know," said the fellow. "Our place is very near yours, and I used to see you about quite a bit, years ago. I thought perhaps on the strength of that you would excuse my coming over to say that we have all felt the greatest sympathy with your people in all this."

Sudley looked up into a ruddy young face, and put out his hand.

"It's very kind of you," he said. "I do remember you. You had a piebal pony. Won't you sit down?"

Halstead dropped into a place beside him.

"You've been out in India, haven't you?" he said. "Oh, you must forgive our suddenly knowing all about you! You've been disgustingly in the papers, you know. I suppose you're not going back?"

"I suppose not."

"That's jolly. We need waking up down here at St. Nick. But I beg your pardon—I forgot."

Sudley almost smiled. "Not in the least," he said. "In a mild way, you see, I can't be expected to feel all this as I should if I had lived at home. We get accustomed to change out there—it seems quite natural that men should be wiped out unexpectedly after one has seen it done a thousand times."

"I say!" said Halstead. He hesitated, and then blurted out boyishly: "I've been no end cut up because I was afraid the place would be closed to visitors." He fairly blushed. "You'll forgive my jumping right into outside affairs, won't you? But, you see, my sister and I rather waved Templeton House at our guest in order to get her to come down." He made a slight gesture toward the two women. "We met her on the steamer; she's a portrait painter—cracking good at it, too. And she sniffed and pointed when we told her about your family portraits, and all that."

"There's no reason on earth why she shouldn't see them if she cares to," said Sudley naturally. "After all, the men who have gone are no more dead than the originals of the portraits."

Halstead thought him a queer fish. "That's jolly good of you to take it that way," he said. "We wouldn't intrude for worlds. But Angela—that's my sister, you know—told her there was a Reynolds or two—isn't there?—and it seems she has a Reynolds herself or something. Anyway, she was keen to see them. Maybe they get points or something. I don't know anything about art, myself."

"No more do I," said Sudley. "My ancestors seemed to me, as a child, to be rather awful, but perhaps her trained eyes can discover something better. You

will be more than welcome, I assure you."

"That's quite ripping of you," stammered Halstead. "Thank you ever so much. I'll trot over and tell her. She'll be no end delighted."

It was quite natural that Sudley should follow him with his eyes, and watch the faces of the young women as they listened to Halstead's news.

The sister was rather a pretty soul. But her resemblance to Vernon was mainly in the general redness of her complexion, a tint less adapted to her than to him.

The other girl was interesting. Her hair was of that intense black that shows prismatic in strong sunlight—crisp, fluffy masses that loosed small tendrils curls near her face. Her brows—Halstead had said once that she could not have done them better herself, and then wondered, blushing, if perhaps she hadn't. The forehead and eyes were the best part of the face, blue, shadowy eyes, brilliantly bright when she was speaking and curiously long at the corners as if her lids smiled. Her nose was impertinent, her mouth imaginative, and her chin had dignity—an interesting combination. She was strongly made, with splendid shoulders and slender hips, and Sudley liked her costume, though he couldn't have described it to save his life. He felt sure that her work would be very like her—well poised, forceful, and quaint.

She looked over at him once or twice as Halstead was speaking, and met his eyes as frankly as a boy. Then, quite to his surprise, she rose and came toward him.

"I want to thank you," she said, "and to be quite sure you are not letting yourself in for a scolding at home by giving us permission to visit the gallery."

As she held out her hand and smiled, Sudley took a deep breath. He rose almost unsteadily to receive her. Something—what was it? Her voice, the deepness of the blue in her eyes, the wonderful change in her face when she smiled? Something in that moment marked the beginning of a new life. He knew it then in a tremulous half

understanding; in later years he came to know it better, though never more surely than as she put her hand in his. He loved her. Argue as he might that love was the result of long friendship and thorough knowledge, he could not restrain the leap of his heart toward her, stranger though she was.

He stammered something about it being a privilege to receive the possessor of a Reynolds, and smiled. But he was wondering all the time where he had seen her before, and if he never had, why he hadn't.

"May I sit down?"

"I beg your pardon."

Halstead, looking over, wondered what had made this impassive man so ill at ease. Probably it was the surprise at her unconventionality. These Americans did odd things, but this particular one did them very well, there was no denying that. So few people could do a sensible thing without qualms.

"My name is Anne Vroom," she said, and Sudley almost said: "Of course." Her name was Anne, she was Anne. She couldn't have been anybody else. "Miss Halstead and her brother were very kind to me on the way over. You see, I was all alone, and they seemed to find that quite appalling." She laughed softly. "I couldn't make out at first just what there was so pitiable in my condition, and so I got them to tell me. I have always been alone. Haven't you?" She turned to look at him with a quick graciousness.

"How did you know that?"

"My métier!" she answered cheerfully. "I try to paint people's insides when I am doing their portraits. One gets to know how as quickly as how to catch the likeness. If I were painting you, I should do you as a man who had been always alone, and who hadn't cared what the future held for him, so long as he kept himself equal to the emergency."

He almost stared at her.

"Am I right?" she asked. "Tell me about yourself."

"You have told me all there is," he answered.

She gave a little nod. "I shall really begin to believe that I am a very clever person," she said.

He was silent a moment. Then: "You might tell me about yourself," he ventured. "I am not trained in seeing through people as you are. Of course there are certain obvious things——"

"I'd love to," she said, with another of her luminous smiles. "There's nothing I like so much as talking about myself. I think it's such affectation to pretend one doesn't! What would you like to know?"

"About the Reynolds, for example."

"But you are intensely clever! You see, it is *all* the Reynolds. My grandfather bought it in London years ago. It's quite a story. There was a poor fellow who had the misfortune to be intimate with the Prince of Wales—I mean misfortune in its earliest sense. Everybody lent money to the prince, you know, and considered it the most delightful privilege. This particular crony sold four of his ancestors for the brilliant spendthrift. Of course it was all done very quietly, to save the poor chap's family pride, and grandfather gave his word never to betray the name. So, you see, the pictures hang in our house by the names of the painters—the Reynolds is the best of all."

"And was it because of the Reynolds——"

"Yes, yes," she answered, almost eagerly. "Our house in New York is full of such ugly things! The staircase was like one in an eighteen hundred and fifty statehouse, and the furniture made one feel faint. It drove me, even as a little child, to go and sit where I could see the 'lovely lady,' as I called her, and rest my haunted eyes."

Sudley laughed. "I can see it all," he said. "And so you became a portrait painter yourself!"

"Well, grandfather felt that it was harmless."

"Did you go to some art school?"

"Yes, I did, secretly. Poor grandfather wouldn't have cared to know about that, so I spent my allowance on lessons, and dressed myself on nothing a year. I did have a time trying to

keep up an appearance, because he gave me such a nice, big allowance, and I could have been quite regal. But his eyesight was failing, you see, and that helped a lot."

"And he is dead now?"

"Does it really interest you? Yes, he died, poor dear, and I was awfully sorry. But then other things were so much better! I got a studio apartment, and furnished it my way. And now, you know, I'm going over to Paris to study for a couple of years. That's all about me, but more than enough."

"It's not nearly enough," said Sudley, "but all I can hope to hear to-day, because this is St. Nick we are coming to."

"Oh, is it really?" She got up, and held out her hand again. "I carry away with me the impression that I have babbled like a mill race—will you forgive me?"

"Never!" he said firmly.

They both laughed. But she saw the sudden mirthlessness of his face, and wondered at the change. Sudley was staring past her as she turned back to her friends, and all light had gone from his eyes.

It was just the word "Paris" that had done it.

Mechanically he gathered up his belongings, and followed the others out upon the platform.

Sudley took a cab and drove away, as if he were dreaming that he was at home, and turned at last into the walled inclosure of the manor. There were large spaces that he remembered as forests full of pirates, highwaymen, and Crusaders, now bereft of their glorious trees, and spreading in ill-conditioned fields to right and left of him. The grounds were in a woeful state, a sight well calculated to bring a melancholy depression to a home-comer. Yet it was the word "Paris" that had done it.

Everybody was extraordinarily nervous—that was the principal impression he received from the meeting with his mother and sisters. Not that it was at all unnatural, but for a while it made matters rather sadly uncomfortable.

His mother had become an old lady since he had seen her, thinner, and, if possible, more hopelessly pessimistic. It was quite evident from her manner of regarding his lean face that she had convinced herself he was marked for an early grave. She had kissed him on both cheeks, and cried; and the girls, if one could still call them girls, came forward after this dismal ceremony, and kissed him, too, and the younger said it was nice to have him back again.

Marcia, the elder, was quite incredibly plain, and the prominence of two front teeth gave her mouth an expression of irritating idiocy. Even Patricia looked vaguely like a promising person beside her sister.

Sudley declined tea, and sat down near his mother. It was twenty years since he had gone away, and he seemed to have painfully little in common with these people, nothing, perhaps, except their recent bereavement.

Lady Templeton, for all her morbid attitude, was far from being resignedly nil; but, for all that, this son was a stranger, and the master of the house, and she regarded him with some uncertainty.

"Benson told me all there was to tell, I suppose," said he, half assertively and half as a question.

"It has all been too terrible," she answered. "I am certain nobody has had as much to bear as I have in all this world. I often wonder what it is all for, and how I keep up under the strain. I always knew there would be an accident in that boat; I am sure I told your brothers so every time they went out in it. I always have had premonitions of things. Somehow, I seem to know what is going to happen—it is very peculiar."

Marcia and Patricia, having heard that their mother was utterly different from other humans a great many times a day for many years, and never having themselves discovered anything at all remarkable about her, were rather unimpressed by this, and Marcia returned to a small table near at hand, and went on with her household mending. Pa-

tricia took a chair near her brother's, and listened.

"I didn't expect the place to look quite so—depleted," said he gently.

"It has always been my feeling that nothing should be said against any one who was gone," remarked Lady Templeton, with a sigh. "But really, Temple, your brothers were not as great a help to me as they might have been."

"I am sorry," he said.

She turned, and, for the first time, smiled at him, albeit a bit nervously. "You'll have to make up all that, now that I am old."

"I will do my best, dear," he said. "Benson must come down and go over the affairs with me. And then we must take what we can and pull the place into shape. The servants are impossible, and the grounds need a great deal of care. Of course it has been impossible for the house itself to do anything but grow beautiful, but it needs attention just the same."

He made the suggestions in a kindly way, but his mother looked at them with dejected favor.

"It's all very well to plan like that, but I tell you beforehand there won't be any money to do it with. What I meant was"—she hesitated, and then, drawing herself together in her old self-assertion, added—"that you should make a good match and redeem us all. It is your duty, since you are the only man left—your duty to yourself as well as to us."

Lord Templeton rose unexpectedly. "It is rather soon to discuss that," he said. "I will talk of it some other time, mother." He walked slowly toward the door, and went out into the hall.

It was a dismal sort of home-coming. He could see that with three incompetent women and two spendthrift men the frail estate had fallen into practical ruin.

He turned from the doorway down the great, dark, paneled hall, his eyes taking in every detail of its beauty and ruin. The stairway was magnificent—he had forgotten the wonderful sweep of those double stairs, the royal carving of the old, majestic oak, that railed and

paneled the inclosure. The old place was sound at heart, he knew. It needed only a little petting and a little care.

He went up into the gallery that flanked the upper floor, and wandered into the disused room where the pictures hung. There was a window seat in an emblazoned window at one side of the room, deep in dust. Sudley dropped upon it, and, bending forward, took his head between his hands.

"Paris!"

The word was a magic one for many people, suggesting recollections of various happy things. But to him it sounded a new despair, and one for which he was utterly unprepared. He saw himself again driving in the comfortable carriage that the doctor had brought to the station, with one arm about the sleeping figure of Aditi. Beside the doctor sat the figure of Jhundra, as ever in his sullen draperies.

That was what Paris meant to him—the settling of a small apartment in a quiet street, installing an excellent nurse and the Hindoo to care for the poor, witless child, and leaving her at last to her dolls.

Jhundra had asked to go with the master, but had accepted his other fate stoically. The master was his father and his mother, and he would stay with the mistress to be near her at "the hour." The doctor's verdict was much the same as that Templeton had received in Dajindar the Desolate. It was impossible to say, the mind might never recover, and the paroxysms of fear might continue, or in time—one could not say.

That was what Paris meant to him. And on the very day he left it, he had met Anne Vroom!

It was far more strange than he could ever have imagined it would be, to know suddenly that one could no longer step out and be an onlooker. He had never felt helpless before, and the immensity of it now made him dizzy.

Needless to say, his thinking brought him nowhere. He had married a girl in Dajindar, and he loved Anne Vroom. That was as far as he could go.

Later, at dinner, there seemed between Patricia and Templeton a better understanding. She regarded this brother as somehow more satisfactory than the Cecil and Charlie who were gone.

She gave him, little by little, the situation in St.-Nicholas-at-Wade. There was, of course, the church; of course, a charming old vicar; of course, an anæmic curate; and the usual Church of England difficulties. Old Admiral Sir Geoffrey Hunt had retired, and come back to live—and perhaps die—a widower in an enviable state of hospitality and contented pleasure. There were a few other people, more or less neutral of tint, very much confused in Templeton's mind, owing to the fragmentary manner of their presentation, but the real life of St. Nick, of course, was the Halstead family.

Oh, he knew that! "I came down with them in the train, Vernon and his sister. They seemed nice, wide-awake young people. They—they had a guest with them, a Miss Vroom. Halstead said she wanted to see the portraits, so I dare say they will be over in a day or so."

"I don't think I could bear to have strangers coming here now," said Lady Templeton inevitably. "I dare say I am old, but a time of mourning seems to me to impel a certain amount of privacy."

"They will not disturb you, mother," said Templeton. "After all, they can hardly be more strange to you than I am." He smiled at her as he said it, and his smile robbed it of any hurtful suggestion. "None of you need see them, you know. Miss Vroom paints portraits herself."

"What an odd thing for a woman to do."

Templeton had yet to face the inevitable interview with his mother, and he was glad to be alone for a little time. He dreaded telling her of his marriage, he dreaded to have to speak the words aloud, even to himself. The fact that even yet he could not tell his mother whom he had married, he knew would weigh heavily in the balance of resentment.

The investigation that he had instituted before leaving Peshawar had so far come to little. Markhund Khalat was well remembered, a dashing, picturesque figure, said, in the bazaars, to be a nearer relation of the colonel than most men knew, but nobody remembered poor little Aditi. "Many women had forsaken life for him," so he was told. It had been a preposterously quixotic thing to do. It was difficult, now that everything mattered so much, to remember how utterly it had mattered nothing.

He finished his cigar, and went back to the room where he should find his mother, but Marcia only was there. Lady Templeton had gone to bed, and Patricia was helping her undress.

"If she is not too sleepy," he said, "I would like to go up and talk to her. I have been wanting to have a talk with her about something very important. Perhaps you can tell me if it would be wiser to wait till morning."

"Mother does not sleep very well," said Marcia. "At least, she is quite sure she doesn't. I don't see any reason why you couldn't see her. But I'll go ask." Marcia really was incomparably ugly.

Templeton went up to his mother's room, some quarter of an hour later, and found himself squaring his shoulders at the threshold. Lady Templeton looked far older in her bed gown, with her hair braided in two languid plaits down either side of her face. One wrinkled hand lying on the coverlet he patted gently with his own.

"I am sorry, mother," he said, "that I didn't tell you I wanted to talk with you, if I am disturbing you by coming in now."

"It doesn't matter," said Lady Templeton. Her eyebrows moved nervously. She was wondering what he had to say.

"I didn't want to talk of it before the girls, at the very first. You see, I know it is something that will disappoint you, and I wanted to have it out with you here alone. It is something you should have known before this; but, curiously enough, I had just sat down

to write you when the dispatch came that called me home."

She drew her trembling hand from beneath his. "For Heaven's sake, Templeton, what is it?" she demanded. "I never could endure suspense."

"It is this, mother," said Templeton: "I am married."

CHAPTER VI.

Templeton was closeted with Benson the next day when Lady Templeton told it to the girls.

"Now, what are we going to do?" wailed her ladyship. "I had counted on his marrying well, and doing the right thing in the county. We are ruined, ruined. There simply is no hope for us. I don't know how other people endure these things. I have always felt that——"

"Who is she?" asked Marcia, not caring, it appeared, just what her mother had always felt.

And: "Where is she?" demanded Patricia.

"She's in a sanitarium in Paris." Lady Templeton fairly gloated over the detailing of every item of horror. "And as for who she is, my dears, he doesn't even know himself!" She was amply repaid for the tone to which she let her voice rise on this appalling statement.

"Why, what do you mean?" snapped Marcia.

Patricia was silent, but she came closer and closer to the bed, and her eyes never left her mother's face. The liking for this quiet, forceful man, who was so unlike the brothers she had known, suddenly flashed a light into her attenuated heart. In that lightning space, she ranged herself beside him, and regarded his other kin as something less than kind.

"She went through an uprising, or a raid, or something, and lost her mind. Templeton took care of her, and married her, like a fool, because he was afraid people would talk."

"Why couldn't some one else care for her?" demanded Marcia.

"That's what I said. But he explained that they were all alone in this

place. I don't know! It is ridiculous and horrible."

"I think," said Patricia slowly, "that it was perfectly splendid."

Decidedly, Lady Templeton was not the only one who could throw an explosive neatly. "Spl——" gasped the listeners, and stared at her.

"Yes, splendid!" repeated Patricia. Her face glowed with it. "Splendid, and foolish, and unselfish, and dear!"

"Unselfish!" Her mother just managed to breathe. "I can't imagine a more selfish act—no thought of his family!"

Patricia flashed around on that. They had never seen her in this mood.

"Of us! And did we give him so many thoughts that we had a claim on his? Wasn't he shunted off to do the best he could for himself while his two brothers completed the ruin of the family? I should think you would be glad that one of us was big enough to do such a thing. We who lived here with Cecil and Charles, and thought that all men were like that—we ought to go on our knees in gratitude to be taught that there are brave, unselfish things being done. I am proud of him, proud to be his sister, and I shall tell him so."

This, indeed, was what she went to do, leaving her mother and sister in a patrician prostration bordering on vulgar rage. She met him coming out of the library, and she calmly kissed him. "Mother has told me, and I understand," she said. "I am proud of you, Templeton."

It was the first time he had ever heard the words.

The next day—Templeton had gone to London—the house was cleaned from eaves to foundation, but there was little for Patricia to do but watch the imperious gardener order about his clumsy country hirelings. Still, it was wonderful to walk about the half-cut walks and realize that a new force had come, something vivifying and energetic.

The Halsteads called that afternoon. Lady Templeton retired to her room, with due solemnity of bereavement, taking Marcia with her; and Patricia but-

toned herself awry into a flimsy frock, gave a few unintelligible orders to the new servant, and went down to do the honors.

Angela Halstead was ruddily dressed, and seemed conscious of her errand. But Anne Vroom, in a queer, quieting green, from head to foot, had come so obviously to do something that she did it without any effort. She sat in a long, easy sort of way, as if her clothes were not tight, and smiled at Patricia as if she wanted to. Patricia instinctively liked her, though she felt a woman's fear of her elegant perfection.

The conversation was rapid and dead-ly dull. They seemed to have entered on a game of shuttlecock, in which their one fear was to let the matter drop. Anne Vroom listened to it for some time, joining in half-heartedly when the topic left St. Nick, and lapsing into a grave scrutiny of the place when the subject became too personal for her to follow. Patricia saw this, and was glad the place was so clean.

But presently Anne rose, with a gentle ease and a soft tinkling of an antique chatelaine on a long silver chain at her waist.

"I want you not to stir," she said. "If you want to make me really happy, let me wander around this heavenly place alone. I am sure to come on the portraits without disturbing any one."

The place pleased her, but pathetically. It gave the fragrance of a beautiful woman utterly at wrong with life. And then there was a subtle newness about it. She did not puzzle over that. That was the Lord Templeton she had met on the train. She could feel him everywhere, coming like a revivifying breeze through a closed house. The rooms, the proportions, the sweeping hallway with its gallery like two wings, satisfied her being, but it needed to be cleansed of its memories, this place. He would do it, she knew that.

And so, at last, she came to the room of the portraits. It was fresh and clean now, but the beloved softening of age was irremediable, thank Heaven. She saw the charming vista of walls, the darkness of old, religiously placed

woods, the deliberate planning of space and quietude. She felt at home there. More than all, she felt nearer to him.

Instinctively she moved over toward the glorious window, and sat down. If he could have seen her then, in the very attitude that he had held in thinking of her, his heart would have played him strange tricks.

She leaned forward, taking her exquisite face between her privileged hands. She had not yet had one quiet moment to herself, and she had wanted one.

She saw again his lean, tanned face as clearly as she saw a written page. There was no weariness there, except that of loneliness, no sorry history, no unfulfilled desires. He had merely done his work, and done it well, but his heart had never been in it.

She was lured to look up. The place was cool and sweet, and the walls were fairly filled with the evidences of the work of other painters. It would be pleasant, too, to have him tell her for what and who each portrait stood—the one thing that had marred her delight in the Reynolds at home was that she had never known who the lovely lady might have been. Gideon Vroom was not a man to break even so light a promise.

She rose, with a half sigh that was wholly happiness, and strayed across the room.

Then of a sudden she gasped. She had moved on along the row of paintings, and now faced, with eyes astare, no other than her own beloved, beautiful, and lovely lady.

Being a creature of no narrow prejudices, Anne sat down on the floor, very much as Miss Betsy Trotwood is accredited with having taken, in a moment of superhuman amazement, to the gravel walk of her garden. There on the floor she sat and stared, and stared and sat.

"It feels like a dream," she whispered.

Little by little as the scattered ability to reason gathered itself into groups like ganglia, and those into the amalgamated power of a working brain, she

got up again, not a whit penitent for her childishness, and peered closely at the canvas. It was all as plain as the scare heads of a yellow journal at home.

It was Lord Templeton's ancestor whom she cherished in her old home, and this was a copy—a very good one, too. Her practiced eyes could detect the artificiality of the tone of age that had been given it. She could see the shallows where in the original were great, soul-satisfying depths. So well she knew her lovely lady that she could even put her finger on the places where the brush strokes took a false direction. But it might have passed—good heavens, it had!

On a new thought she turned and made a rapid survey of the room. Yes—there they were, the other two, the jolly fellow in the pink coat, with the dog; how badly he had done the dog!—and the simpering idiot masquerading as a shepherdess.

Standing in the middle of the room, she took a deep breath. What curious fate had brought her on such a flimsy chance, and what was she going to do with the situation?

As she put these questions to herself, knowing herself incapable of answering them, Patricia came in softly.

"Miss Halstead and her brother have gone on to make another call. They said they would stop for you on their way home. I begged them not to disturb you now."

Patricia came over to her timidly.

"Have you found anything to interest you?"

The question almost brought a smile to Anne's lips. "Why, yes—a great deal," she answered. "Come over here and we can talk a while." As they established themselves in the window seat, she turned to her hostess with characteristic directness. "Did you ever have an artist in your family?"

"Why, yes—my father's brother. He had some sort of talent, but he never did anything with it, except to use it as an excuse for having a studio in London. He was rather dissipated, I am afraid."

"Ah!" said Anne. "And who is the"—she stumbled on the familiar phrase—"the lovely lady over there?"

"That is Victoria Templeton," said Patricia. "She is beautiful, isn't she? That's the Reynolds. I used to stand and look at her and wonder where all the family beauty disappeared to, Marcia and I are so very plain." She laughed frankly.

Anne's eyes had assumed the far-away, impersonal gaze of the portrait painter. "You aren't at all plain, really," she said calmly. "But you must not wear your hair like that."

She leaned forward and gently drew the strands over Patricia's ears looser, and pushed them forward about her face. Then she gave a deft twist to the short hairs that escaped bondage under this treatment, and found that they curled with the relief of a stretching cat. Patricia flushed with embarrassment and perhaps pleasure.

"You have no idea—" murmured Anne, her head on one side. Then suddenly she laughed merrily. "I beg your pardon; upon my soul, I do! I forgot I wasn't painting you!"

But she had done more than to improve the frame of Patricia's face. She had established a sudden and delightful intimacy between them.

"It tickles," said Patricia.

"You won't mind that after you have looked in a mirror," said Anne. "I'm sorry your brother isn't here to approve the change."

"He's sure to do that. Everything has been changed since he came."

Anne was aware of that.

"Tell me about him," she said.

Patricia's face was glowing now. "Oh, I can't," she said. "I couldn't begin to. He is perfectly wonderful. I didn't know there were such men in the world. Just fancy his coming back here this way, and stooping to such a petty labor as pulling three dull women out of the slough of shiftlessness! Only a great man can leave a great work and turn to a small one, and do it well."

"I believe you are right," said Anne. "What a dear you are to understand. What did he do in India?"

"He was in the survey," replied Patricia, half absently.

"Sounds dry, but I know it is not," said Anne. "He is just the sort of man who does the quiet, dangerous work."

"But you understand him, too!"

"That much is easy to see." She drew up one chain of her chatelaine, and looked at a tiny silver ball of a watch. "I'm not going to wait for the Halsteads," she said. "I shall walk home. I suppose you walk a good deal. Isn't that the hall mark of an Englishwoman?"

"Why, yes—I walk every day, more or less."

"Then come with me to-morrow, will you? About ten? That is my most gilt-edged compliment, for I usually prefer to walk alone." She cast one last look at the "counterfeit lady," as she called her to herself, as she went away.

When Templeton returned from town he met the news of her visit with a quiet word of regret that he had missed her. But in his own heart he was not at all certain whether he was sorry or infinitely relieved. He puzzled over it, walking up and down his room till dinner time, but could not decide. All day he had been too occupied with merchants and lawyers to think much of himself, but now that the stress of the day was over, the waiting perplexities crowded in about him.

He had but barely met her; he must avoid her now. Avoid her—well, he could do that until she went away, which would be soon. But what of the years after that? Years—it was a terrible word.

The roadway of life stretched barrenly before him. So it had always, but then he had not cared. Now care he did, with a passionate force that made him a stranger to himself.

CHAPTER VII.

Patricia was standing in the newly awakened garden, watching the men at work, when Anne Vroom found her the next morning.

"Like all poor speakers, I begin with

an apology," said Anne, smiling. "I can't go to walk this morning, and I had forgotten all about it. Will you forgive me?"

"But of course," returned Patricia. Her disappointment showed in her face. "It's not so bad as it might be," Anne went on, putting her arm genially through the other's, "for I have an amusing alternative to offer."

Patricia brightened.

"I won't take a refusal, because, you see, you have already accepted my society for the morning, haven't you?"

"Why should I refuse?"

"Why, indeed? Well, you see, day before yesterday I promised to paint a portrait, and I set this morning for the first sitting. It may prove amusing to you."

"Oh!" Patricia was smiling delightfully. "I should love to watch you."

"Good," said Anne. "Then let us got on to the admiral's at once."

"To the admiral's?"

Anne paused. "Now, don't tell me," she said, at last, severely, "that you don't know him, or don't visit, or anything dull."

"Oh, I know him," said Patricia slowly. "I haven't seen him for years. But then——"

"I'll not stop for another word," Anne imperiously interrupted, and swung her companion about into the path. "I'm going to call you Patricia," she announced calmly.

The admiral received them in boyish embarrassment, but pleasantly aware of his awkwardness. "It's the uniform," he explained, and laughed in a hearty throat chuckle. "I feel—I can't tell you—silly!"

"You are gorgeous," said Anne. "I wouldn't miss you for anything. Just imagine you're on deck. Where did they put my things?"

"Why, you see, I didn't know—so they're in the library."

"I don't care where so long as there is a good light," said Anne, stripping off her gloves and removing her hat and jacket with a quiet assurance that Patricia envied. "You and Patricia can

talk while I sketch you in, if you won't wiggle around."

"If Miss Patricia will sit where I can see her," suggested Sir Geoffrey, with a little bow.

"Just as I did in the schoolroom?" proffered Patricia, with an archness she had not suspected in herself.

"What—you didn't!" exclaimed Anne delightedly, as she followed her host into the library.

"Well—she was learning her letters when I was in compound interest," said the admiral gallantly, "but she did sit in the same room, to be sure."

"And you did look at her!"

Anne was on her hands and knees before her box of chalks and colors.

"I am afraid——"

"And without a uniform to carry the excuse of being silly!"

"Only dreams of one," said Patricia gayly. "Do you remember you always said——"

Anne sat back on her heels, fitting a bit of charcoal into a metal clasp. She was amazed at a sudden new quality in the admiral. He was not so awkward now, but hugely playful, quite at ease. Patricia was colored pink.

"What did he always say?"

"That he was going to be a sailor."

"Is that all?" She bent her head again over her box.

"I said I should come back and carry her off in my clipper," boasted the admiral finely.

Anne smiled absently. "Carry her off in a clipper—it doesn't sound luxurious," she said idly. "And why were you so opposed to the idea, Patricia?"

"If I remember rightly——" began the admiral.

"I—— Oh, what nonsense you are talking, Anne!" Patricia hastily put in. "Is that how a portrait begins?"

"All good ones," said Anne calmly. "I begin from the inside. So you went to sea, just as you had planned?"

"Well, it wasn't exactly as glorious as I had planned, you know," the admiral modestly admitted. "But I assure you I didn't earn this masquerade costume by polishing the handle of the big front door."

"And when you came back—she wouldn't have you?" said Anne, dreamily flourishing her pencil.

"He never did come back," protested Patricia, who had at last recovered a poise.

"But, good heavens, here he is!"

"I mean, with a clipper," she said, laughing.

Sir Geoffrey laughed, too. "Why insist on the clipper?"

"Oh, I didn't! In fact, I didn't know what it was, and had a rather horrid suspicion it was some sort of traveling bag. The clipper was your idea."

"So it was—for a time."

"Do you mean," said Anne, her gaze fixed with almost insulting intensity upon his nose, "that you have just come back—the first time since the compound-interest days?"

"Guilty," said he, with a glance at Patricia.

"Here have I been languishing for years," she sighed drolly.

"Breach of promise, I call it," said Anne.

She went to work after this, precisely in the manner of a singularly gifted person who understood the fourth dimension of space. She simply was not there, which is the phenomenon reduced to its lowest possible terms. Sir Geoffrey leaned on the chair, and looked at Patricia. Patricia took up a book of many illustrations, and did not look at Sir Geoffrey. Their flutters at conversation, beginning almost invariably on the admiral's part, with an almost invariable "Do you remember——" passed Anne by unnoticed. Her whole physical and mental being had passed out of the ken of them.

Sir Geoffrey had seen Patricia once since his return, and so little had she thrilled him that he had wholly forgotten to remember the days when one tutor had served him and her brothers, and she, in a pinafore and pigtail, had laboriously conned the invention of Mr. Cadmus in the same room. What if the frock Templeton had brought her and the coiffure of Anne Vroom's suggestion had made her a different creature? He could not think that. He remem-

bered nothing very clearly now except the clipper.

Sharply, suddenly, Anne laid down the brushes and her palette. "It's gone," she said.

"What?" said Sir Geoffrey.

"What?" said Patricia.

Anne laughed. "I mean I can't work any more," she explained. "The guiding fingers have unclasped. I dare say you are terribly tired, too. Well, it will do for a beginning."

"Do?" cried Patricia, coming forward. "It's positively uncanny."

"It's like him," said Anne. She was packing up her materials.

"Like him? It's worse than that!" said Patricia emphatically.

Anne half turned to look at the admiral. "Do you know that's a very unusual woman?" she demanded.

But he was staring at the canvas.

"It doesn't make me feel a bit silly," he said simply.

"That," said Anne, "is because you are not silly—inside. And you are almost as proud of being an admiral as you ought to be."

"But I am not only an admiral," said Sir Geoffrey, "I am a host, and it is nearly luncheon time."

Patricia rose. "Oh, we really couldn't stay this time," she said, smiling. "You see, they don't know at home, and I promised to bring Anne back with me."

Sir Geoffrey sighed. "Well, I can at least extract some satisfaction from your 'this time.' I have the next sitting to-morrow, and will you lunch with me then?"

"Of course we will," said Anne flatly. "I think it would be jolly."

As Patricia went out a little ahead of them, the admiral detained Anne by a touch on the arm.

"How long will it take to paint that?" he said, with a nod of his head in the direction of the easel.

Anne laughed, drawing closer to him.

"How long does it take to build a clipper?" she demanded.

Templeton and the others were at luncheon when Patricia brought Anne unexpectedly into their midst. The moment might have had a certain draw-

back had not Anne's peculiar faculty for eliminating discomfort swayed the situation. As the newly imported serving man set an extra place for her at the table, she stood quite at ease near Lady Templeton, and talked about the admiral.

Her ladyship was at first obviously antagonistic in a mild, well-bred way, but Anne's quiet persistence toward friendliness won at last. Marcia was silent, obedient; Templeton stood holding his napkin, looking at his mother; Patricia had gone to smooth her newly posed hair. When Anne's place was ready, she slipped into it as calmly as if the butler were her own.

"The admiral goes finely," she said, in response to a pleasant question from Templeton, the first he had addressed to her. "He is an exceptional subject for me, and I shall make the most of him."

"How many days—" began Marcia, wondering why she could not help but like this woman, of whom she was on so many counts jealous.

"I think I shall give two solid weeks to it," said Anne simply. "The Halsteads have been kind enough to permit me to stay."

"I am confident they appreciate for the first time the advantage of an admiral," said Templeton absently.

Inwardly he was saying to himself "two weeks?" And avoid her? And yet there might have been a temptation in the comparison between a couple of weeks and years, had he not been the man who did what he thought must be done, and that at once. As the notion of having her near him for so long a time gradually unfolded itself unseen during the course of the handicapped luncheon, he found himself half amazed at the lure of it, although he had gauged it well, half incredulous of the stature of this sudden giant of longing, and more than ever determined upon his course; characteristically he did the thing, there and then.

"I find I shall have to go to London, mother," he said. "May I smoke?"

"Again?" wailed Lady Templeton. "I thought you had finished for a time."

"It's the chancery suit," said he.

Anne looked up quickly. "Have you really a chancery suit? Not a real, delightful, family chancery suit, like Jarndyce and Jarndyce?"

"I am afraid I never quite understood that case," said Templeton, smiling. "And perhaps I shall never get the gist of this one, for that matter. But we have had it in the family long enough to be absolved from the odium of being *nouveau pauvre*."

"But I thought," Lady Templeton aggrievedly began, "that the case did not come up for several weeks."

Anne saw that his flush was one of annoyance. "It may not," he admitted quietly. "But perhaps by being on the ground and in going over the intricacies very carefully myself, I can keep the lawyers hard at it. At present I cannot see why, with a little sharp urging, it cannot be wound up in a reasonable time."

Lady Templeton rose with a sigh, refusing to be encouraged, and the others followed her.

There was one thing that had been constantly in Anne's mind ever since the previous day, as, indeed, it could not help but be, and that was the astounding matter of the portraits. She wanted poignantly to "do something" about it, and yet found herself utterly incapable of formulating a plan. Obviously since she had told Templeton the story of the buying of the Reynolds, he would know that her grandfather had paid roundly for the paintings, for the prince had not been a borrower of small sums. Obviously, therefore, she could not hope to have the originals restored to their proper places as a gift. It was equally evident that the estate could not yet afford to purchase them, and on the other hand she could not rest with the knowledge of their ignorance of the counterfeits that hung upon their walls.

Without having formulated any plan whatsoever, having found herself quite incapable of finding a solution to the problem, she had a vague hope that somehow in a conversation with Templeton the opportunity might come to make known the truth in some felicitous

fashion. So that she quite hopefully asked him to walk back with her to the Halsteads when he had finished his cigar, and, in the same mood, declined to be driven over, an alternative that permitted of fewer opportunities.

But the plans of men and mice have no greater chance of going aley than those of women and cats. And Anne was partially stunned to find, when she and her host set out in the early afternoon, on her return home, that a sort of spiritual pressure was being registered by each of them which made it impossible to talk at all. She became quite suddenly conscious that she felt his presence keenly, that she was an appreciable degree happier walking along silently beside him than she had ever been before in all her life, and that because he was in it the world was a joyous delight. It brought a fine color into her face, and her eyes shone. She looked steadily ahead of her as she walked.

In her ears was a ringing like the vibration of the silver string of some musical instrument. Her lips parted, and her eyes were brilliant. This was what it meant to be alive—she had never known. Stevenson had likened the advent of mutual love to the half-frightened entering of two children, hand in hand, into a dark room. But it was better than that. There was no fear in her, though she felt the awe of the greatness. And there was no darkness. The earth seemed tingling and sparkling with sympathy.

When he left her at the door, he merely stood a moment bareheaded with her hand in his, while, for the brief space, their pulses beat rhythmically together in their clasped fingers. He looked up into her eyes as she stood on the step above him, and then, without a word, without a smile, he turned and left her. In this last assurance, her heart leaped up, and would not be stilled. It was long, long after that she remembered she had not yet told him about the portraits.

Templeton walked about by himself the remainder of the afternoon, and went home at last craving interminable

solitude. But his mother, it appeared, wished to see him, and had been waiting his return. He dropped his cap with a sigh, and went to find her. Had he seen her standing at the window watching him as he walked away with Anne Vroom, and had been able to foresee the culmination of her thought in that moment, he might not have been so totally unprepared for what she wished to tell him.

But, even prepared as she herself was, she faced him from her high-backed chair indubitably nervous.

"Marcia said you wanted to see me about something, dear."

"I didn't tell her what," she said. "The fact is, Templeton, I have had a chance to think this matter over."

"What matter?"

"Your—your marriage."

The man moved, and thrust his hands into his pockets. "Yes?" he said indistinctly.

"It is very simple," she said, but her hand shook as she drew her scarf about her. "The woman is not your wife, as a matter of fact, and it is imperative that you marry well. You owe that to us. From what you told me, I gather that she is quite incapable of understanding so much as that a ceremony has been performed. We can always care for her, as you are doing now, and she will never be the worse for your gaining your freedom."

"You mean," said Templeton, "that I might have the marriage set aside?"

"I do, certainly."

That the vision of Anne Vroom should have come to them both in the same instant was quite unknown each to the other. Her ladyship had dreamed her dream of the heiress, as Templeton had closed his heart on the longing for the woman.

"That is quite out of the question, mother," he said quietly.

"Why?" Her word broke in a sharp anger.

"Because I will never do it."

"You have no right," began Lady Templeton shrilly, rising from her chair; but her son came toward her, and took her hands.

"Sit down, mother," he said gently. "Please don't wear yourself out. What you suggest is utterly out of the question, and no good can come of discussing it. As a matter of fact, I refuse to discuss it. As for my duty to you and the girls, I shall never shirk it, and never do other than to make your lives as comfortable and happy as I can. I can't do any more. Already things are better, and they will go on being better all the time. You must be content with that."

She felt the indestructible finality of his position, which was not a decision, but an invulnerable attitude. And she began to cry. He had never seen tears on a wrinkled old face before, and the sight of them was harshly distressing. But it did not more than hurt him poignantly. He knelt beside her, and took her in his arms.

"Dear," he said, "please don't do that. You don't want me, I know, to do anything dishonorable. Don't fret and worry about the future. There are plenty of ways to make the estate yield money, and I have nothing else to do, have I?" He took her handkerchief from her, and wiped her cheeks. "There's the chancery suit, for example," he said, as one might encourage a child.

Bitterly as she resented the failure of the interview, she was yielding enough to be impressed with his point of view. The fleeting thought that the woman might die soon came hopefully through the unavoidable acknowledgment that he was taking hold well, and that things were better. She struggled gently erect, and regained her handkerchief.

"When are you going to London?" she asked, through its muffling folds.

He rose to his feet, and stood looking down at her.

It came to him almost as abruptly as it did to her. The hands in his coat pockets thrust forward rigidly.

"To-night," he said, "to-night."

CHAPTER VIII.

Matters at St.-Nicholas-at-Wade went on, in the fashion set for matters long ago, except those nearly concerning Anne, and that was a fashion she

had set the very day she had been born. Nothing remotely connected with Anne Vroom was ever at a standstill. And she was quite satisfied with her work.

From the very first, she had caught the admiral, he was the man who had come home. She had rigorously painted him as the man who should marry Patricia, and she had won the day. The plans for the future did not include a clipper, but that was a detail. The only plan for the future in which she was particularly included was that for her return to Sir Geoffrey's after her study in Paris and on her way home to America, to paint the companion portrait of Patricia.

The only string in the clavier that had not vibrated was Templeton. Since his walk with her, Anne had lived two weeks at St. Nick, and not a word from him had come to her. She had expected she scarcely knew what. It had not been a situation to show crude developments. Undeniable as their understanding was, its quality was too elusive to build events upon, or even the shadow of events to come.

She had heard, through Patricia, that he had succeeded in bringing the chancery suit to an abrupt close, at some sacrifice, to be sure, and yet with sufficient success to justify his action. And she was glad that a long-closed revenue was to be reopened to them.

The only thing that tormented her, as she shook the dust of St.-Nicholas-at-Wade from her traveling bag, was the matter of the portraits. It had only one redeeming quality, and that was that it could wait.

But, on the whole, it was a fairly happy Anne Vroom that set sail for Paris. She went off with a singing heart, and was still singing as she unpacked her trunks across the Channel.

The great painter, Berquet, pronounced her work good, and had found her a little studio.

The swift prevision of glorious days, messing in paint, came to her like the radiance of a stupendous sunrise, and, with a little gasp, she sank into the window seat and laughed with tears in her eyes. It did not seem possible that

life could hold so much without spilling many important drops. There were so many happy people in the world that she wondered at the very thought of a pessimist. There was Patricia, for example, and the merry little girl in the smart toque, carrying the handbox down the street, and the very pretty woman at the window opposite. One had only to look. But Anne Vroom was not the unseeing sort of person who looks once. The woman opposite was more than pretty.

Anne wiped the half tears from her eyes, and looked again. There was something odd about the face, intent on the occupation of the hands, and yet rather absent—rather "not there."

In a moment, her vis-à-vis had shifted her position a little, and then the reason became apparent. The pretty woman was cutting out a doll from a sheet of paper, cutting very carefully, and the mystery was explained. Her intensity was for the mere automatic labor, while her thoughts were elsewhere, perhaps with the father of the little creature who was probably sitting at her feet waiting for the doll.

The woman was so intensely pretty that Anne continued to watch her, although her reflections had veered away from the object of her eyes, and were again considering the multifold delights of a traduced world.

Then she became gradually aware of something that amazed her. The woman opposite had plastered the doll against the window pane and was trying to make it stick there. When it did, she laughed. In the fading light of the day, Anne saw now she laughed—quietly and contentedly and selfishly, like a child. She drew a deep, uncertain breath, and stared again. The woman took up another strip of paper, and began cutting a new doll, leaving the old one with the arms outspread upon the pane of glass.

The vagueness in the pretty face suddenly flashed its message to Anne, and she quivered, as a sensitive skin to a sharp touch. There was no mind to irradiate the beautiful face, there was nothing but an abnormal absorption in

the childish eyes. The child who was being amused was the woman herself. A great pity strangled Anne for a moment, she who had been speculating, womanwise, upon the happiness of life.

And then, quite unbidden, the artist in her rose to dominate the human. What a picture—what a picture! She stared at the woman, half sharply, half absorbedly. What a picture!

Then, as the twilight deepened, it suddenly changed. If she had fallen asleep and dropped into a nightmare, she could not have dreamed anything so strange and terrible.

The woman relaxed her hold upon the half-cut doll and the scissors. Her chin lifted, and her eyes dilated with something too horrible to be called horror. She sat rigidly erect, and then screamed.

Anne could not hear her, but she saw it. Frozenly, she watched the woman point before her with the fingers of both hands, and then, in an agony, cover her face, rocking from side to side. But even before Anne could get upon her feet, as, in the moment of shock, she involuntarily did, clutching the gown to her breast, the curtains behind the woman in her window seat parted, as at the touch of a whirlwind, and some one bent over her. Anne, in her rigidity, watching with wide eyes, saw the paroxysm sway the poor creature to and fro, and made out her companion to be a man in a strange, loose gown, bending over her, and speaking vehemently into her face.

She had begun to tremble violently, as she watched. And then the beautiful little creature seemed to look up, to look startled, and to grow calm. The man beside her, whose face was thin and swarthy, continued to speak to her, Anne could see, gently and in consolation, and then another person—or, rather, an arm in a long, white cuff, like that of a professional nurse—unexpectedly pulled down the shade, shutting the whole picture from her view.

Anne stared a while longer, and then collapsed, shuddering, into the chair again.

It was a shattering commentary upon

her contention of the happiness of life, and it wrought upon her mood deeply. She was disgusted with herself to find that even while she yet shook with the horror of the thing, the unsilenced annotator within her continued to repeat heartlessly: "What a picture! What a picture!"

So insistently did the idea beset her that she stayed away from her studio one morning with the avowed intention of "waiting to see." But not a sign showed in the apartment opposite, save that the Indian servant came out before noon, in his loose garb, carrying a basket, and disappeared at the corner of the street. After *déjeuner* she set off, half disgusted, for the studio; but could not work, and finally went out again to walk home.

There had been no word from Templeton. And yet she felt no hurt. It was too clear that she understood him. Patricia had written, happy plans of gowns and journeys and years, and Miss Halstead had sent a dull chronological page or two of the happenings at the house where she had been entertained. Well, it was little. But she could wait. She could wait.

When she reached the corner of her street, she was stopped by her interest in seeing the woman who had been so much in her mind come out of the house with her nurse. At least, Anne supposed it was the nurse. The long cuffs were not in evidence with the street costume, and yet there was something in the firm way she helped her charge to cross the street to the green little square near by that very much resembled the determination that had lowered the window shade.

Anne stood motionless, watching them make their way to a bench under one of the half-dozen trees, and then, almost unexpectedly to herself, she crossed the way and went deliberately to join them. The pretty woman was gazing before her at a pretty little bird, and the companion was busy with the leaves of a book. It could not have been more difficult—and yet Anne Vroom had never considered that. She came to a sturdy stop before the latter,

and said pleasantly, in her quite perfect French:

"I want to speak to you, and I don't know quite how to begin."

Both the women on the bench looked up, but one continued staring while the other went back to her interest in the bird.

"I live opposite you," said Anne calmly, looking into the upturned eyes that fixed her. "I've seen—well, you know what. And I am so sorry. And I had a queer sort of conviction that she is a compatriot of mine."

The nurse, during her speaking, had taken in her personality from head to foot in a quick, clear way that seemed to have no scrutiny involved. And she now smiled quite suddenly.

"Madame, she is always alone, yes. Yes, she is English or American," the woman answered, with a superb ignoring of a slight differentiation. She moved her charge, making room for the newcomer.

"I won't sit down now," said Anne. "But could I come to see her?"

The nurse was more than willing, one could see that, and yet held ambiguous reserve.

"Madame—mademoiselle—lives just opposite?"

"I am not married. Yes."

There was a quaint pause. The pretty woman, ignoring them utterly, was bending over a leaf that she had pulled from a near-by shrub, following its veinings with her finger. Both the others glanced at her, and their looks met with a kind of shock as they turned back.

To Anne, something rather curious had come. She had been obsessed with the notion of painting the poor woman, was not quite sure if that had not been the motive sense that had sent her over to accost the nurse, and yet, now that she was nearer, that she had her hand upon the desired chance, she realized that she did not want it.

Not for all the fame in the lockers of a miserly world would she use this pretty little creature to forward her own ends. She marveled at her own late callowness, and wondered that she

could have harbored such a thought. Near her, and at face with her, she felt only a gentle wish to shield her from publicity, a desire to make her twilight less oppressive.

The nurse had glanced at her charge again and back. "Of course, she doesn't feel the loneliness," she said quietly. "But it would do no harm, I think."

Anne pulled herself together, and smiled.

"Then I will come over," she said. "Thank you. I am Miss Vroom. What is her name?"

"Mrs. Sudley," said the nurse, with an effort. "American names are so difficult. My name is Deschènes."

"Thank you," said Anne. "Sudley. I will come over to-morrow."

CHAPTER IX.

After all her initiative effort, it was, on the whole, quite reluctantly that she did go over early the next afternoon to make good the promise she had before wished to make. The apartment was a charmingly pretty place, the little drawing room bright with chintz and flowers. It looked rather like a nursery, to be sure, but there was reason for that.

The manservant was out, Mademoiselle Deschènes informed her, and Anne wondered if she felt vaguely relieved. She took off her outer wraps with the calm heedlessness Patricia had envied, and went into the drawing room. Little Mrs. Sudley, dressed in a pretty pale violet, was seated flatly on the floor, gravely fitting a frock of pink tissue paper upon a featureless doll.

The nurse was about to speak to her when Anne, by a gesture, advised against it. She quietly sat down beside her hostess, and said, as if continuing a conversation of some friendly duration:

"Why on earth has it no face?"

The childish, exquisite eyes looked up slowly. There was no surprise or curiosity in her expression, or in her voice as she asked softly: "Who are you?"

"My name is Anne Vroom," said the other.

"I can't remember names," said Mrs. Sudley, rather sadly, "not even hers." She pointed to the doll she had laid down.

"Perhaps you could if she had a face," suggested Anne. "I don't think anybody would be very easy to identify under such circumstances. Shall we give her some eyes, and all that sort of thing?"

"How?"

"With a pencil, perhaps."

"I can't."

"But I can. That's my business, to make faces."

The childish eyes wondered at her, and Anne, on the sheer impulse of the appeal of the sweet beauty before her, leaned over and kissed her on the cheek as she picked up the doll. A curious, startled look came into the pretty face, and she put up her hand to the spot that Anne had kissed. Her brows knitted faintly, and she stared at nothing.

"Good gracious," said Anne to herself, as she rose to look for a pencil. "Nobody ever kisses her—good gracious!" Anne's own existence had been sufficiently barren of that form of salutation, but then she wasn't an appealing baby. "Where on earth is your husband?"

To her amazement she had spoken aloud.

"What is that?" asked the little creature on the floor.

Anne flushed and strangled. "Here's the pencil," she said hastily, and came back to her place on the floor.

Anne drew with a clear, sure touch upon her block the head and figure of a woman. It might have been the Milo, for its lack of arms. These latter she drew separately. Then, with a deft swing of her knife, she severed the sheet from the pad, and cut out the doll. The arms, after she had fastened them with a piece of thread, moved with a negative grace.

The child-woman had crept about until she sat close, and her sweet breath came and went on Anne's chin, as she bent forward. As Anne laid this anatomical marvel upon the block, the

soft breath was indrawn in ecstatic wonder.

She drew doll after doll, until finally the nurse came in with Jhundra at her heels.

Anne rose, with a quick, contrite: "Oh, it is late, isn't it?"

The nurse nodded. The Indian servant stood motionless, regarding her deeply, with no apparent understanding that servants should hear, but not see. Anne, however, was untroubled by the scrutiny, being one of those rare people who do not expect the customs of their own race to obtain in every far place of the globe. She said good-by to her hostess briefly, but that individual, who was in her more absorbed moments a victim of echolalia, merely repeated word for word Anne's good-by without looking up.

The nurse followed Anne out into the hallway.

"I thought you might be interested," she said. "The doctors have practically decided to operate. They have sent for her husband to discuss it with him."

"Oh!" said Anne Vroom breathlessly. "Oh, he will be glad!" She was forgetting to put her other arm into her jacket. "When is he coming?"

"In a few days, I suppose," said Mademoiselle Deschènes, but the other was paying no attention.

"She will suffer dreadfully?"

The professional nurse smiled. "Oh, with opiates!" she said largely. "Besides, to return to life!"

The phrase arrested Anne further. "To return to life! She will remember nothing since—since—"

"In every probability, nothing."

Anne Vroom withheld a shudder. Like almost all normal beings, the idea of a wandering mind was fearful and wonderful. The nurse helped her with her coat.

"What could it have been?" she asked involuntarily, and more to herself in wonderment than to the nurse in curiosity.

"The Indian knows," said Mademoiselle Deschènes, and the answer, unexpected and mysterious, gave her companion another paralyzing thrill. "I

have never been told." The nurse swung suddenly into self-commiseration. "It has been a very hard case—to be planted here with a madwoman and that dreadful silent creature. You cannot even hear him walk! I shall be glad if the decision is made in my favor, for then we shall have another nurse and Christians about the place. Can I help you with your veil?"

Anne, reminded of her delaying departure, turned to the mirror quickly. And just in the pause that followed, a sudden, terrifying, horrible scream split the air at their ears.

Anne gasped, blanching, her arms fell, and she flung about.

"She's hurt!" she panted, every instinct of the white race in arms against the dark one, a member of which had been left alone in the farther room.

"You must go—go quickly," said the nurse, starting away. "I am needed. It is always like that. No, she is not hurt. It is sunset."

"Khund! Khund!" The moan shook the air like the note of a pulsing organ.

Anne tried feebly to gather up her things as the nurse unceremoniously left her and went quickly between the hanging chintz curtains of the doorway. Her fingers fumbled over her purse, and dropped it. As she raised herself, a whisper more penetrating than any clap of thunder seemed to fill all the air above her. "Look! Look!"

She had stumbled toward the door of the apartment, when a soft babble of Hindoo in a man's voice reached her. It was soothing, even to her, and of a tenderness not meant for her, and it seemed to knit the troubled air into its past calm. As she blindly felt her way out, the liquid, gentle syllables seemed to bid her, as they bid another woman, not to be afraid. There was a wonderful compelling hypnotic strength in the encouragement that clung to her like a pair of strong hands supporting her as she fled across the street into her own home. When she reached her room she flung herself upon the bed crosswise, and her shuddering turned to sobs.

A night's sleep, and a morning at work, served to steady her sufficiently

for the undertaking of another visit to the poor baby-woman.

The quaint hush of the place fell upon her as she went in and took off her things, the child-grown was as ever in the shaft of sunlight, intent upon her dolls.

With a sigh she sat down cross-legged, and came under the spell of the restricted room. The dolls were all spread out, and claimed a smile from her. The pretty little woman looked up, and her dimples showed.

"Who are you?" she asked gently, in the far-off tone that seemed to Anne like the echoes of a fairy tale.

"I am Anne," she said tenderly.

"Would you like to see the dolls?"

There was no recollection there that Anne herself made them.

Something restless in the atmosphere seemed to drift into Anne, and she abandoned herself to the touch of the solace.

Once only as the child—for such she was—bent over her work, and the yellow, uncontrollable curls brushed delicately against her face, did she find herself out of tune with the soothing of the silent quiescence, found herself staring at the smooth white skin of the temple with its clear, straight veins, and shrinking from the thought of sharp knives and bandages and blood.

Silently the pathetic, pretty child sat opposite her, with no shadow on her appealing face of the trial to come. Something thick tightened about Anne's throat as she worked. The very charm of the flowing chintz seemed to grow nearer, suffocating, menacing. Her hands trembled, and her breath came hard. The very placidity of the care-free creature opposite seemed to intensify her sense of the menace of the future.

The sun shone into the room, the roses glowed on the hangings, the child smiled, and everything was still.

Then a new silence fell between them in the room with all the retarding influence of a bomb.

Mrs. Sudley felt it first, and glanced up. Anne felt it later, but the power of it struck her breath out of her body,

and left her almost gasping. She looked up, and there in the doorway stood Lord Templeton.

She did not notice the look of his white face, she did not see the fainting marvel in his eyes. She saw only that it was he, and she came to her feet like a lily growing in a field.

"You!" she said.

The rare red of her heart beat upward into her face. Her hands shook. She took a step nearer him.

"They told you I was here?" she said.

"I did not know you were here," he said, and his voice held the spirit of the great desert. He looked from one to another.

"But then," said the woman in Anne Vroom, blithely if albeit wonderingly, "why are you here?"

Between them something dropped, as if the glance of him had been a signal for the lowering of a curtain. Near her on the floor the child played with the real dolls, very much as a wanton god may play with real people. The sunlight struck sharply and warmly across her in her absorption. The man's eyes wandered to the sight of her with a hopelessness he could not have put into words. Anne standing, her hands clasped upon her breast, seemed to have nothing to do but wait for his answer.

In the still, flowered-lighted room he looked at the little creature at her play, and from her to Anne. And then his eyes began to burn, and suddenly became dull. He looked away at the playing child as if he marveled at it.

"That is my wife," he said.

So did the earth pass away, and there was no more sea.

CHAPTER X.

It seemed to Anne Vroom, as she faced Templeton in that moment—a moment of concentrated years—that a door had been closed suddenly between them, shutting him forever from her sight; for, with the words he spoke in the simplicity of great suffering, her eyes lost him, and she stared at a blank-

ness. He stood before her, offering no further explanation, though his own look questioned her bewilderedly.

He watched her, as if waiting for her to speak. The color that had risen in her face at his unexpected entrance had disappeared, leaving her quite white. And then even as she stood so, staring, the eloquence of her confession fairly reached his ears. He had never known that she knew he loved her, but she told him now—the pallor of her cheeks and the stunned fixity of her eyes told him—that she had heard his silence as now he was to listen to hers, and he caught his breath on her name in the very terror of the joy.

"Anne!" he said. "Anne—my God!"

It seemed too monstrously unreal that he should be to blame, too superhumanly cruel that she cared for him. Of this he had never dreamed. Steel himself as he might, he had seen poignant visions of himself as free and devoting the entire current of energy of his man life to the gaining of her, little by little. But the face of Anne was the face of the woman who loves, and who has believed and been betrayed, and because of its impenetrable gentleness it was for him to accuse himself.

"Anne," he said. It seemed he could say no more.

She looked wearily at him, and suddenly sat down on the couch, drawing her wide hat toward her as it lay on the cushions. Blindly she thrust the hatpins in and out. Presently she sighed, and looked up.

"I can't quite understand," she said, and he had to guess at what she said.

Templeton's heart groaned on the rack of the sight of her. He stood looking at her across Aditi's bent head, Aditi, who sat between them on the floor with her new dolls.

"I went away as soon as I realized," he said, and the remark seemed wholly irrelevant. The situation in the hands of two Latins would have had volubly dramatic moments. They bore their blundering agony with set lips and an everyday tone. "I—it was from the first moment I saw you. But I thought

—you see—you were going away. It was like——” He made a gesture that awkwardly enough suggested a living death, an incarceration. “I never thought—I can’t believe now——” He fell silent, gazing at her. “Anne,” he said then, and this, too, seemed strangely unimportant, “I did my best.”

She seemed to nod an indefinable assent as she bent her head somewhat, and put her hat atop her soft, coiling hair. She had nothing, it would appear, to say. Indeed, what was there to be said? Her hands fell from arranging her hat, and clasped themselves on her knee. Then one of them went out groping and found her gloves. She drew them through her fingers once or twice, and rose.

“I came to make dolls for her,” she said, in an absent way. “I live just opposite, and I saw.”

She went mechanically toward the door, and his hands went out as if he would have held her, and fell again at his sides. She paused a moment, with one hand upon the frame of the doorway, and then went out. Templeton stood fixed. Aditi paid no heed to either of them.

In the dullness that seemed to have taken possession of her senses, Anne found her way into her own quarters. The dullness she clung to, knowing that underneath there lay an agony of pain she was to endure when the apathetic numbness wore more away. She sat in the great armchair, that was providentially turned from the window, took off her hat again, and rested her head heavily against the cushioned back.

For the first time in her life she felt alone. Her surroundings, her life, her personality itself, seemed to have betrayed her. She felt as people in an earthquake may do when the very foundations of their world prove treacherous. Never before had she been able to appreciate the feeling of other solitary persons like herself who took their independence as a grievance. Now, suddenly, she was homeless and alone.

Selfishly for a time, her unhappy heart steeped itself in personal pity.

Her achievements and ambitions seemed hollow; her very presence in Paris was a mere emphasis of her friendlessness. As a matter of fact, she was childishly and piteously in need of what nurses call a good cry, but she herself realized only the absence of a motherly bosom and comforting arms.

One conviction was paramount in her mind. As she had instinctively gone away from Templeton’s presence, so she was impelled to continue the course in a larger fashion, and leave Paris. All the plans, the slow development of years of preparation and planning, that had brought her on so far a journey, were powerless to dissuade her. The work—everything had become valueless.

She was seized with a nervous feverishness to start at once. To her landlord and landlady her sudden determination of instant departure seemed insanely erratic, but not un-American, and since the little apartment she occupied was quite desirable and she had already paid for a three months’ future occupancy, they made no Gallic efforts to dissuade her. Indeed so efficient was the aid they gave her—monsieur and madame and a maid all assisting in the packing of her trunks—that she stood ready to depart in the space of a couple of hours.

In an uncertainty quite foreign to her normal poise, she selected the things she would need on the trip, and would have her trunks sent after her. To her hosts this fine disregard of added expense was quite magnificent. They wondered while she hurried in and out of their presence what had determined her upon this sudden change of plan. Madame was sure she had reconsidered a rejected suitor, and was going back to give him yes for no. Monsieur said she was romantic.

She did not so much as change her gown. Monsieur brought a cab to the door, and saw her luggage disposed within and without. He receipted his bill, and sent her cablegram, and as she drove away hung up his little notice to the world at large that there was a superlatively desirable apartment on the

second floor that might be snapped up by some mortal favored of the god of chance.

Anne did no more than unavoidably glance across the way to where Aditi's windows showed. There was an automobile at the door, and, as she descended the steps into the sunshine, two men stood opposite, talking rapidly and with the air of those who waste neither time nor words. One of them entered the limousine, and was driven away just as she got into her little public carriage, and the other man walked rapidly up the street. It was the last definite thing she noticed in Paris.

CHAPTER XI.

It was the face of an older man than the doctors had expected to see that Templeton turned to them as he rose wearily from his chair on their entrance. Doctor Ribot had spoken of "the young wife of an Englishman," and the others had associated the husband as well with the idea of youth. Yet, though they could not know it, he was far younger than the expression of his face, which indeed is probably as old as man.

Doctor Ribot pressed forward, and shook his hand.

"A pleasure indeed to see you again, Mr. Sudley."

The name struck oddly on Templeton's ears. He had forgotten, in those first days, before Benson had taught him his new names and titles, that he was Mr. Sudley no longer. However, it could not be of any importance. He had not thought of it in time to spare Anne.

Ah, had he ever guessed what she had in that brief little flash revealed to him—that she did care for him—his whole course would have been different. He would have told her the whole wretched tale, and left untold nothing that could suddenly spring out at her from an unsuspected ambush. But he had not known, and she had not known. Life was a blundering mess.

He returned the doctor's greeting heavily, and acknowledged the intro-

duction to the other two surgeons who accompanied him. Ribot was elated in a grisly way at having so interesting a case to bring to the notice of such eminent men as De Lande and Farrère, and more humanly delighted in the personal association. The strangers bowed, and the pressure of demand upon their time was clearly evidenced in the immediate question from Farrère:

"This is the patient, Madame Sudley?"

Aditi sat as ever on the floor. She had turned to look when the sound of their entrance disturbed her at play, and was staring at them. Her ever-first question came to her lips.

"Who are you?" she asked, in her high, child voice.

Templeton roused himself. "These are friends of mine, dear," he said gently.

Farrère knelt down beside her. He was a thin, tall, old man with a clean-shaven, wrinkled face and steady, kind eyes.

"What pretty dolls," he said.

She nodded contentedly, and handed one to him with infantile gravity.

"And you play with them every day?" Again she nodded, watching him. "What is your name?" said Farrère quietly.

"I don't know," she answered softly, after a pause.

"I should like to make an examination," said De Lande to nobody in particular.

Ribot, who had seen her every day and had done the like himself, nodded.

"She wouldn't mind," he said. "See." He sat down on the floor in front of her, and smiled.

A flickering, uncertain smile on her lips answered:

"Who are you?"

"I haven't any name," said Doctor Ribot casually. "What lots of hair you have! So much more than I! Just see how short mine is." He turned his head around, and ran his hand up the back of it. "But yours is long, isn't it?"

He leaned toward her, and put both hands to her head, running his fingers

into and under the heavy curls. As his finger tips passed softly over the poor little cranium, he laughed softly, and talked in a dull monotone.

"Millions and millions of long, yellow hairs—there's the longest one I'll wager—and here's the shortest—and even that is ever so much longer than one of mine, isn't it? You see, it's quite simple." His tone did not change as he spoke to the others. "I am confident of an unnatural depression—here." Farrère and De Lande came nearer. "Such a lot of hair." Ribot sat back, his hands on his knees. "Now, what do you think?" he said to her. "Here's a friend of mine who hasn't any hair at all on the top of his head. If you please, doctor!" With a motion, he drew Farrère down beside him. "Would you let him see how much you have? He might find out how it is done and get some himself. Just think, no hair at all. Poor man!"

His well-known, unwavering voice did not disturb her, and indeed soothed even the faint start she gave as Farrère's thin, pointed fingers slipped past her temples. Ribot went doggedly on, and with some ingenuity got her at last to turn around with her back to them, and so substituted De Lande for Farrère without alarming her.

Templeton stood at a little distance, facing the future dully. Aditi, witless and playing with toys, was one thing, and from one point of view no great problem. But Aditi restored, thinking, and remembering—that was quite another set of tools.

The doctors rose, and came toward him, nodding and talking in low tones. Aditi had not even turned back when they left her, but bent over her paper family.

"I think I may say we are agreed, Mr. Sudley, on the justification for an operation. There is undoubtedly a depression near the posterior part of the third convolution or the anterior lobe of the cerebrum. It rather surprises me that the patient does not suffer more acute aphasia under such conditions."

Templeton listened, but made no reply.

CHAPTER XII.

As the doctors closed the door and went away, Templeton sank into the armchair near him. He was but partially conscious of the entire significance of the scene in which he had just taken part. His mind, between the two problems he had to consider, and which no amount of considering could alter, seemed to have fallen to the ground, as the homely phrase goes concerning two stools.

Aditi and Anne. The names rang alternately in his head like the distressing dingdong of a warning bell. He had said to Anne that he had done his best, yet he could not be sure that at the same time he had acted wisely. During his whole life he had obeyed orders unquestioningly, and the decisions he had been called upon to make affected no one's safety and security save his own. He felt for the first time the sorry ignorance and helplessness that hamper when inviolable relations with other human beings involve one's actions, until to proceed in any direction seems fatal to the happiness of all.

Anne! He bent forward in his chair, his face in his hands. The wonder and the love of her crushed him. He had never dreamed that women were like that. She had known, in some mysterious woman way, that he loved her, and she had accepted the love he had never spoken, and royally and proudly she had given him her own. In the blinding glory of that revelation he could do no more than put his hands before his eyes, while his soul abased itself, and prayer, rebellion, despair, and gratitude tore at one another in his breast.

So he sat, during the patient brilliance of the afternoon, bent and gray and tortured, while Aditi in a billow of soft silk played with her dolls, and saw no shadow of a grim to-morrow falling athwart her sunlight.

The pretty chintz room seemed wholly indifferent to the harboring of these two souls, one in the grinding depths of misery and one in the placidity of infantile contentment.

Then, after the quiet hours had

drifted by, unheralding the confusion that was being swiftly borne down upon them, the door of the room suddenly opened, and Jhundra, a mass of tempestuous draperies, precipitated himself to his master's feet.

The stillness of the little room was shattered. Jhundra was beating his hands together, and his body was vibrating with the power of fear, and his face was not the face of a man who says: "All things are written."

Templeton roused instantly, sat up, and stared at him. Aditi had glanced up, frowned in comprehension, and gone back to her play sublimely irresponsible. Templeton gazed in dumb amazement at the shaking figure of his servant, whose hands, now on his knees, now in the air, seemed to implore something that was strangely not protection. Jhundra was incoherently and volubly making much sound.

"What are you saying?" Templeton spoke sharply.

Jhundra made a violent effort at control, and more intelligible words burst from him in an urgency of terror.

"Hide—hide, master! He is here—I saw him—he is running—he will be here—the master's death—let it be I, master—you are my father and my mother—the woman knows nothing—hide, master—let it be I!"

Templeton leaned forward, and laid a biting hand upon the man's shoulder.

"Hide? From what?"

Jhundra strove to speak from a throat distorted with fear at the delay. His eyes flashed once at the door and back to Templeton's face. Then, with an arm flung out inertly, he pointed toward Aditi.

Templeton's hand closed tighter, Jhundra nodded.

"Not dead?"

Templeton's eyes were wide and strange.

"Hide!" gasped Jhundra.

And there came a sound of steps bounding up the stairway from below. With a dry sob, Jhundra whipped loose, and in one wild silence made the door. There was a long knife in his right

hand, straight from the belt. He was braced on both feet bending forward.

Templeton fell upon him from behind, and laid his hand over the fingers that held the weapon. Jhundra straightened, and for an instant the men looked into each other's faces. Then something in the brown eyes did obeisance to the gray eyes, and the knife fell to the floor.

The outer footsteps had reached the head of the stairs. Templeton stepped over the knife and opened the door. As he went out into the hallway, closing the door behind him, and holding the knob, Jhundra cursed royally.

"But you must not go in like that," said Templeton quietly.

The man before him halted, and swung on one foot forward. He was dressed most precisely in the garb of a European, but his nationality was undisguisable. His dark eyes glared at Templeton, wonderingly and murderously. He was without a hat, and his hair, which was very thick, clung to his forehead damply. His physical beauty was clamorous.

Templeton held the door, more against Jhundra than the newcomer. His other hand hung empty at his side, but his face bespoke a determination that a leveled gun could not have emphasized. The man before him was panting.

"There is no need for you to force your way in," said Templeton. "I came out to tell you that she is ill—that you would probably kill her if you went in, like that!" The perfection of the dialect that bubbled from Templeton's mouth seemed to awe the intruder. "I am doing this merely to spare her—I suppose you are with me in that? Will you step in here and let us talk it over? You don't want to kill her, do you? Perhaps you have been ill yourself?"

He was outwardly quite calm, but small wet drops were gathering under his hair. He held fast to the door. He could not differentiate between the breathing of Jhundra inside and that of the man before him. He felt like a steel rod; that is, if a steel rod could be infinitely weary.

Khalat, having come to so sudden a stop in the execution of his purpose, seemed with difficulty to collect his wits. But Templeton waited until the man relaxed and drew himself up.

"That is better," said Templeton quietly. "Will you step in there and listen to what I have to say?"

The man glanced at the door, hesitated, and sullenly acquiesced. He looked at the other as if he had never seen such a man before. Templeton's hand relinquished its hold on the door-knob after he had begun to say: "The room at your right—in there."

The stranger swung about on his heel, and went into the dining room. But here a sense that he was being circumvented poisoned his Oriental mind, and he turned again sharply upon Templeton, his face flushing.

Templeton waved his angry hands away.

"Sit down," he said somewhat impatiently. "I want to tell you what has happened. You are Markhund Khalat, are you not?"

"I am," said the other. After one glance of dull surprise, his face turned toward the door, his hands opening and closing like a fish's mouth out of water.

"We thought you were dead," said Templeton. "Lord, how we searched for you! Tell me if I am right; you were hurt, badly hurt, and have been ill yourself? You have traced her to Paris so soon as you could be about, and you came upon my servant in the street and followed him here?"

"Yes," said Khalat.

"Now, listen," said Templeton wearily, as he sat down. There was no answer. He lifted his head, and brought his hand down on the table with a smash.

"Listen," he said again, and Khalat understood that a white man was speaking.

"Sit down," said the white man, and Khalat sat down, albeit he kept his eyes on the door, and his fingers moved nervously about his belt.

Templeton sat erect. "Yes, she is there. Yes, she is ill. Do you get that?"

Khalat nodded.

"Then look at me. Nobody is going to hurt you."

The Hindoo started, his black eyes glowed, and he stiffened, eying his opponent.

"I dare say you went through a lot of plain hell before she ever got to Dajindar," said Templeton, holding the man's look. "I don't know what became of you, but I found her dying. My servant deserves the thanks for having kept her alive—I merely helped him. But we worked night and day caring for her, and he risked his life in order to bring help to her. He rode alone through the hills to bring the regiment."

Khalat's eyes softened.

"I was all alone in Dajindar," said Templeton, "the only white man, when the mess began. It was—wasn't it—because she was white?"

Khalat put two hands on the edge of the table in front of him.

"Yes," he said.

"I heard her moaning, and went out and found her. Then I carried her into my bungalow, and from then on the credit is Jhundra's. She was badly hurt, and the child was dead. Are you fainting?"

The other drew himself up.

"Go on," he said heavily.

"Jhundra brought her back to life, and we have cared for her ever since. She is well now, in a way, but she is like a child. She plays with dolls. She does not remember anything."

Khalat groaned, and his fingers pressed heavily against the table.

"But every day at sunset," said Templeton, "she is seized with a vision. What she sees you probably know better than I. She points, and says 'Look!' And then she screams and cries: 'Khund! Khund!'"

To the Englishman's unutterable horror, the man wavered, and then slid forward in his chair, casting his head upon his arms and moaning. Templeton coughed, and moved miserably. It was an insular privilege to think they did these matters more conservatively in England.

"The doctors," began Templeton, and at that moment Jhundra entered noiselessly.

The servant looked at the bowed head of the stranger, and across it to his master. Templeton received his quaint permission to continue.

"The doctors have a hope of restoring her," he went on, and the weariness of his heart found utterance in his tone. "I do not know what is going to be done—there are new complications to consider now—you see, in Dajindar, I—"

Jhundra made a swift motion, and Templeton instinctively paused. Then Jhundra made a faint sound with his foot as one might in entering a room. "Master," he said humbly.

At the sound of the voice, Khalat looked up. Jhundra eyed him a moment in silence, and then vaguely his expression changed. He said two or three quick words. To Templeton, with all his knowledge of the dialects, they were completely incomprehensible.

Khalat seemed for a moment non-plused, then he replied. He also put out his hand, and there was a fleeting touch of the fingers on Jhundra's own. It was done in the space of a breathing. Templeton took it to be some sort of Masonic recognition, but he saw that the attitude of the two men had sensibly altered one toward another.

They looked into one another's eyes for a brief space, and then Jhundra made a swift motion with his flexible hands.

"In this oath, I swear it," he said fixedly. "I myself have watched her night and day. She is yours—utterly."

Templeton caught the meaning of the words, and the muscles under the skin of his face tightened. He had not thought that Khalat might have wondered what manner of man he was.

He stood up sharply, about to speak, when Jhundra turned his eyes upon him, and he paused. He felt the situation lifted from his hands. He felt as might a servant in the presence of his master, and he stood mute.

For he had learned to respect the wisdom of the man. Quite irrelevantly

he realized for the first time what the Hindoo's devotion had been in leaving his home and all therewith interwoven, to bear the heaviness of the burden his master had assumed, without so much personal satisfaction as the presence of that master.

Jhundra waited until he saw in his master's eyes the permission to continue. Then he spoke.

"The hour is almost here," he said, and turned his luminously shrewd eyes upon the other. "We call it the hour," he explained. "The master has told you. In unreason seems she awake. In the hour she seems to sleep, but her mind remembers. She calls for you. Every day I have answered in your name, and she is quieted, believing the lie. But for to-day—" He turned to Templeton, stretching out his thin-palmed hands. "The master knows I am ignorant. I drive not in great carriages, nor wear over my eyes the glasses of wisdom."

Templeton almost smiled, but his engrossment in Jhundra's intention made his appreciation of the mingling of childishness and power in the man a fleeting one.

"But that which I have done for the woman has seemed good, and I may yet be right."

His expressive face wrinkled into a look of supplication so doglike that Templeton felt a most unconservative restriction in his throat.

"Teach us, Jhundra," he said kindly.

A humble pride transfigured the servant's face. He turned proudly to Khalat.

"The master trusts me," he said. "Will you do the same?"

Khalat looked from one to the other, and then nodded. "What would you say?"

"The hour is upon us. If when it comes, the real Markhund—"

Templeton caught his breath. And there was a stillness in the room. Jhundra turned his head to look at him.

"Is it not better than knives, master?"

Templeton was staring at him. Not in the least insular was the frankness

of his look. Jhundra with his instinctive wisdom, was he not consciously greater than these men who drove in great carriages and wore on their eyes the glasses of wisdom? How came he to be the master of such a man?

But Khalat, being of the same race and having not the barrier of blood between him and the speaker, was not so quick to understand.

"She is there," he said, pointing toward the closed door. "Why may I not see her now?"

Templeton turned on him. "She is not herself now. Only at 'the hour' does she remember. You cannot go to her now. Jhundra is right."

The Indian seemed suddenly to tower above him, "tall like a tree," as Jhundra had said so long ago. He seemed a dark cloud lit by the lightning of his eyes.

"You," he said, suspicion flaming anew in the thunder of his voice, "you are to say when I may or may not see my wife?"

The words hung in the air. Templeton had gone white. Jhundra, whose eyes had flashed to him, watched him with a frown. It seemed there was something the master might say that he wished left unsaid.

But as the gradual comprehension of Khalat's inquiry sank into his mind, Templeton made no attempt to answer. He slipped back into his chair, and the vision of Anne's face was before him as he laid his head upon his arms on the table.

"Oh, God!" he said softly, and again: "Oh, God!"

Markhund Khalat, his imperious question unanswered, stared at the white man, and then turned to the other, his brows still thunderous. But Jhundra was spared a further effort of diplomacy. The ghostly stillness was torn by a scream as a curtain might be rent to admit the light. Jhundra drew a breath, and Khalat stared. Only Templeton sat motionless, not hearing. There were footsteps in the hall running, and the sound was not audible before Jhundra turned to Khalat, stretching forth his hand in invitation.

"Come," he said. "Come, and save her from the knives."

He drew the other man out into the hall, and pushed him through the doorway of the chintz-hung room.

Every tendon in Khalat seemed to have relaxed into utter uselessness at the sound of the terrified scream. It was the last thing he had heard in the night of his supposed death. He seemed dragged back by it now, to the scene of stealthy, murderous horror. He had scarcely known, he would never know, just what happened. Vaguely he remembered hurling himself forward toward an unseen menace, and something had risen in the dark, and then, as Aditi had screamed, he had forgotten everything. Now as he heard it again, coldness ran over his flesh like the touch of steel. But when he saw her he forgot himself.

She was sitting on the floor, her dolls about her. The soft blue silk and white lace of her dress seemed to mock at the dreadful expression of ultimate fear that distorted her face. Khalat looked once, feeling again the strange conviction of the lapse of time, and almost believing the danger and her terror still to be existent, and then he caught her close to him, as he had meant to do that night long since when a new, painful darkness had fallen between them.

"Aditi!" he said, and it seemed a sob. "Aditi!"

Jhundra nodded. "I have called women Aditi in my time," he said to himself. "All things are written."

Then his assurance faded. For, watching, he saw her flush purple, and a gasping rattle in her throat, choking her, terrified him. Suppose he had been wrong! Khalat still held her, too closely to observe her face. The purple deepened, till her face was nearly black, and then it paled, swiftly and by starts as if the beating of a heart. Then, white and spent, she lay on his arm, her eyes closed, sweat sprinkled upon her brow and lips, gasping and weary.

Khalat bent and kissed her face, half starvedly, half timorously.

Her eyes flickered and opened, and she smiled. His tears fell upon her. Weakly she lifted her hand and touched him. She was white as salt now.

"Dear," she said, and fainted quietly.

Jhundra did not move. He could not have said why he felt that wisdom greater than his was controlling the amazing changes before his eyes, and he accepted his justification when at last, on the very instant when his purpose wavered, she breathed audibly, and her eyes unclosed.

Jhundra watched but an instant longer, and then went out in his soundless fashion, and closed the door. Before he entered the room where sat Templeton, who was his father and his mother, he searched in the folds of his girdling belt for something he had hidden there not long since.

Then, silently, he went in. Templeton was sitting just as he had left him, his head buried upon his arms. Jhundra, who knew nothing and understood everything, stood near him a moment, a moment never to be forgotten by the God who gave him life. He had served—he had done well. He was flooded with a happiness that made him tremble.

And, still trembling, he laid down upon the table something that he had been holding in his hand. It was a triangular box of silver, with a long, heavy chain, and all that it contained was a scrap of parchment bearing a blessing and a prayer.

CHAPTER XIII

When Templeton lifted his head, he had suddenly begun to live. He felt as might a man whose heavy fetters, unjustly borne, had just been stricken from his limbs. He felt the blood in his veins run riotous, and the breath of his lungs grow deep. He was a man, alive, in love, loved, and unhampered, and his soul sang high in the new air.

The mere outward details of the life about him assured the fact. The closed room where the new Aditi lay, beguiled and tended by the gentle nurse and the

presence of Khalat into a new old life that bore no shadow or stain—not even shadow of the horror that had so engulfed her spirit—the departure of the doctors the next day, themselves exhilarated by the psychic cure they had had no hand in, the pervasive contentment of Jhundra, who had done his part as he thought adequately, and as they thought miraculously—every subtle influence of the atmosphere about him seemed directed to swell the current of his new life.

So exultantly sure of life's goodness was he that the news he learned at the house opposite of Anne's departure for America scarcely served to depress him. To him it was merely an indication of the depth and vigor of her love. She herself had told him how much she hoped of the study she was to pursue in the Old World, and how much more than anything in her years of life had been the love of her work.

Yet she had given it all up, had thrown her half-realized, half-hoped ambitions away, and had gone across the sea from him as might any girl who sought only to preserve the purity and deathlessness of a love that was denied her.

The absorbing joy of his heart enshrouded him, and he went through the hours of each day as a man walking in his sleep with his eyes fixed. He stood by while a frail, whispering Aditi, whose name was really something else, a something he found he could never connect with her, plighted a new troth to Markhund Khalat under the surveillance of the American minister, and even himself sent a cablegram some two pages in length to the people who had heard nothing from her since the night of her elopement, without at all realizing that he was present in the flesh.

He received Khalat's friendship as one accepts matters in a dream, and the only thing that seemed virilely of the present was the unfaltering devotion of Jhundra. From him he was never to part, and the knowledge of that had filled the strange creature with a deep and abiding joy. Jhundra fairly hung about him during the end of

the sojourn in Paris, and he endured the voyage to England with a calm that by no means matched the condition of the Channel.

It was during this heaving journey that he told his master what little he had been vouchsafed by Khalat of the other side of the story of Aditi—for subtly had he manoeuvred to direct and curtail the intercourse between the other two men. It was he who prevented Templeton from telling Markhund of the marriage ceremony performed by the reluctant Scot.

"Some day," he had urged, and "later." And indeed Templeton came to agree with him that, because of her being already married, there were no legal steps to be taken to annul that ceremony.

The poor little Aditi, who had been known to them only by the names of stars and goddesses bestowed upon her by Jhundra in the hours of his comforting, was in reality a mortal of the not-exalted name of Bessie Moulton. She had lost her heart and subsequently her romantic head, and had to thank a kind Providence, who reserves a peculiar tender care for those not overburdened with common sense, that Markhund Khalat had been genuinely in love with her, and had not deceived her as Jhundra, wagging his head, felt sure he had done in many other instances.

They had been duly and solemnly married, and whatever one could urge against the union of two different races, Jhundra felt sure—and, for that matter, so did Templeton—that she could have found no greater or more sincere devotion in a man of her own color.

Moreover, Khalat, in the first days of his agonized search for her, had come to realize somewhat of the unspeakable torture he and she had occasioned her people by their silent elopement, and he had gone back to them partly to set himself right with them, and partly to enlist them in aiding his search. Therefore, he had not forgotten in his happiness, albeit an anxious one, to send them word that all was

well, or would be so as soon as Aditi had recovered her strength.

Jhundra had a few wise words to let fall anent her people's horror of the alliance, which gave Templeton to understand that for their sake at least this hideous happening had been a good thing, since so much would they rejoice over her escape from shame and death, the other matter would receive far less attention than it deserved.

And Templeton, listening, smiled and said:

"Jhundra, truly if all things be written, it is in your wits that they are all set down."

To England, therefore, they went, for it was necessary that Templeton appear at the final settlement of the chancery suit and at Patricia's wedding. His second arrival in Albion was by no means as fraught with pregnancy as the first, though he, indeed, was more absent in mind than on that occasion. Still, he managed to respond when he was addressed as Lord Templeton, and he gave his sister in marriage to the admiral as composedly as if he had launched a family, full of Templeton girls into consortship with the navy.

Lady Templeton wept at the ceremony. She sniffed over the sentiment that, "after all, a daughter was a daughter," a pronouncement that Marcia met with her accustomed placidity.

The admiral himself was ruddily delighted at this tardy consummation of a childish vow, and Patricia in her unwonted splendor was positively pretty. She had not forgotten that to have her hair loosened about her face was desirable, albeit ticklish.

Impatience was the emotion Templeton most keenly felt throughout the whole matter. The impossibility of explaining the entire amazing affair in a cablegram had deterred him from sending any such message to Anne, and the three days' delay in starting cost him more than he could have expressed.

At last, with the departure of the steamer, nothing lay between him and Anne but the friendly sea, and he spent the days of the crossing in an interminable pacing of the decks, his eyes

ever on the lifting horizon, and his desire urging the ship.

Literally he walked almost every step of the way from Liverpool to New York, and yet once there he flung himself from the gangway in no weary mood.

Of Anne's studio he knew no more than its existence, but the old house where at least he could get news of her was well known enough to make his quest of it a mere matter of a question or two.

The house itself rose before him as he mounted the steps just as she had described it. Hideous in brick and brownstone, its square face presented to the street an indubitable expression of conscious respectability. But he was thinking little of its appearance. What mattered to him was that within its doors some one would be found who could tell him about Anne.

As he rang the bell, its sound echoed about him as the final note in the long pageant of the accumulated past. This was the end and the beginning.

The elderly manservant who opened the door to him had but a fleeting surprise, situated mainly in the eyebrows, for his unexpected appearance. He stood restfully, admitting the visitor, and not at all as formidably repellent as his position might have made a less experienced soul.

To Templeton's quick inquiry he replied that Miss Vroom was not in her studio, was in fact living at home, had in fact been somewhat ill, and could in fact be seen at the present time if the matter was urgent, although she in fact was not generally disposed toward the idea of visiting intruders.

Templeton preferred not to be announced. And the servant, feeling perhaps in his very presence the justification thereof, part way escorted and part way directed him to the room where he was sure Anne might be found.

She was indeed there, as Templeton found her when he went in. She looked wistfully white and languid, lying on a grim horsehair sofa she had endeavored to render more humanly acceptable by the addition of incongruous but cheer-

ful cushions. A thin little book hung drooping from her hand, and one arm was across her face.

Templeton was dimly aware that the room was unexpectedly large, with little furniture, though the walls seemed burgeoning with ornate gilded frames.

He looked at her a moment, his heart beating in his ears; then, fearful of startling her, stepped out again into the passage to herald his approach by some audible movement.

But to his surprise, as he did so, she moved and rose, facing him.

"I have seen you," she said. "You may come in. What is it?"

Her voice was so pathetically the ghost of its old vibrant self that involuntarily he paused. Her eyes and his own were the first of them to meet. And then suddenly, it seemed, he awoke to a consciousness that he held her in his arms, that he was finishing an incoherent but apparently satisfactory story of misery that had beset them, and she was lying back on the strength of his arm looking into his face, till he bent his head over hers and watched her eyes close flutteringly as he kissed her.

It was all altogether too much to believe, with the delicious certainty that one could not doubt it, and they sat together on the couch where she had been lying, telling each other over and over again every detail of the long way that had led to love and separation.

Then, as at the end of his hundredth recital of his first knowledge of his adoration for her, he took both her hands to draw her nearer, she resisted, smiling.

"You have done all the talking," she said softly, though her voice, weak as it was, had the glorious thrill of happiness. "And you are taking me on trust. I harbor a terrible secret—yes, truly. I was minded to tell you long ago, but I did not dare, because—"

She hesitated, and her eyes were tender.

"Because?" said he, holding fast her hands.

"Because you were proud and poor, beloved," she said, and could say no

more for a time the while he kissed her.

But at last she released herself again, and laughed, flushing.

"Have you no desire to know on what point I have kept silent?" she demanded, one hand brushing her thick, wonderful hair from her forehead.

He watched the gesture as if every fraction of it were too precious to be lost, and then, as her hand fell again into her lap, he answered her.

"Silent? You? Have you gone through the world flattering yourself that your face, and your bearing, and your movement are not more eloquent than many words?"

She laughed, and then grew grave.

"You have no secrets, poor child," he said.

She was looking at him steadfastly. "I have," she said. "It is one that may bring a little cloud between your brows—not for anything I have done or you, but for the memory of one dead."

She had never quite realized before, often as she had thought of the thing, what it meant to reveal the dishonor of a member of his family. She leaned toward him suddenly, and laid her arms around his shoulders.

"It will help you to be gentle with those who are left," she said tenderly.

He looked straightly at her, realizing, without understanding, that she was speaking of his mother. It was not in the vaguest sense clear to him, yet his devotion for her sprang anew in the realization that she had seen more in the invalid than a self-centred embodied complaint, that she had guessed at the long inuration to neglect and hardship, and saw only with forbearance and compassion.

Puzzled as he was, he only smiled at her.

"You will tell me," he said.

Between them there was to be only understanding.

She drew him to her with her firm, thin hands, and a sudden smile shone

upon him. With her head a bit to one side, she regarded him, and just as suddenly the smile died, and she put her hand about the back of his goodly head in a quaint, motherly way, while her eyes grew wistful.

"Oh, dear," she said very softly, "am I enough?"

God bless her, she understood everything, he told himself in the swift instant that he bent over her other hand to kiss it.

"You are everything," he said, and she caressed him as he lingered, bending down.

Then, with a faint word, she rose, drawing him with her, and he wondered, as he went with her obediently, why she was taking him directly across the room, and why she came to a stand before one of its many pictures.

"Do you remember," she said, holding his eyes with hers, "that I told you about the Reynolds?"

He made a motion of assent.

"I want you to look at it," she said.

He drew his look from her, and turned, and then amazement settled on his face. He stared into the canvas, and his frown grew deep. On either side of it hung two others that claimed an equal share of his bewilderment. She had dropped his hand, and stood now watching him, and she saw his face change from a blankness to understanding, and from that again to a happy gentleness. He put out both hands to her, and, receiving hers, brought her into his arms.

"Because I was poor and proud—beloved," he said gently.

She trembled a bit under his unspoken praise. "It was only," she said somewhat hastily, and in confusion, "that I did not know what to do. I tried to think of some way. But now"—she lifted her head, and her face was ablush on the word—"now, since we are together, we can surely do it?"

"Together, sweetheart," said Templeton, "we can do anything."





CURB

Margaretta Tuttle

AS the archdeacon crossed the street to enter the parish house to speak to the doctor, he saw Jeffrey's automobile draw up to the door, and this being the third time in the last fortnight that he had seen Jeffrey with Mrs. Carson, the archdeacon gave the rose-veiled figure Jeffrey left behind him in the machine an attention tinged with curiosity. If the attention was observed behind the blank expanse of heavy veil that by no means shrouded her identity to one who knew her, Mrs. Carson gave no indication of it.

The archdeacon was not permitted even the briefest of salutations, and he passed into the house justly annoyed. The situation of a young woman with immense wealth at her disposal, as the result of the confinement of her husband in a hospital for the wealthy insane, seemed to the archdeacon a more delicate one than it evidently did to Mrs. Carson, whose complaisances never appeared to extend in the expected direction.

The archdeacon still recalled with discomfort his last interview with her. She had, it is true, given him without demur the check he had asked for, and she had, with interest he would not have suspected of her, inquired minutely into the charities he represented. But when, with some effort, he had moved the conversation to more personal topics, he found himself suddenly enmeshed in comment that might mean any one of a dozen things, and that a man could not answer with discrimination, or even with speed. The archdeacon could endure the first part of her sentences, but

he never knew just where their finish was going to leave him.

This time Mrs. Carson had concluded their interview with the solemn assurance that it would have been a great waste if he had missed taking orders, for nature had evidently designed him to adorn a niche of the episcopate. After two weeks he was still musing over that word adorn. He wondered if she talked that way to Jeffrey.

The archdeacon knew Jeffrey only as he encountered him in the home of Jeffrey's sister, Mrs. Morris, where, since her widowhood, Jeffrey lived. But he knew Mrs. Morris rather well; she was included in many of his plans, charitable and temporal; and, as she had no reason to withhold her opinions from him, the archdeacon also knew Mrs. Morris' concern over her brother's attendance on Mrs. Carson.

When he opened the door into the rector's study, he found Jeffrey about to leave, and, as they stood a moment together, the archdeacon took in the young man's blond fairness of skin and hair with a new appreciation of his resemblance to his sister.

"How is Mrs. Morris?" asked the archdeacon.

"She is on the edge of neurasthenia over the rector. She does not know whether to spend her energy combating his free-seat idea or to report him to the bishop for the heresy of his last sermon. I am at present delivering her remonstrances." He turned to the rector. "It is not the only penalty I pay for having gone through college with you, Rex. In the morning I bring you disapproval from my family for what

at night I am going to help you put through."

The rector laughed. "Somewhat contentious for a vestryman, I will admit."

The archdeacon stared. "Indeed! When were you appointed to the vestry?" he asked.

For Jeffrey added to the shrewd management of a growing business attention to clubs, and yachts, and diversions that usually preclude service in what seemed to the archdeacon more serious matters.

"Ask Thorne to tell you about it," said Jeffrey, nodding at the rector. "It is a good story, and I have to go. I cannot persuade you to come with us, Rex?"

"You are persuasive enough, but I have work to do."

"That sounds too general to be convincing."

"Well, then, I have to call on three old ladies, two of whom have a grievance."

"You should let your parish visitor call on all elderly women with a grievance. It is the duty of all unmarried clergymen who have a parish visitor. The archdeacon, being a bachelor, agrees with me, I know."

The archdeacon declining to commit himself Jeffrey departed, and in a moment the automobile with the rose-veiled figure in it had turned the corner of the street.

"Such support," said the archdeacon, with dignity, "cannot possibly help you."

The rector gave the archdeacon a level glance. "A little sense of humor might, don't you think?" he said.

But the archdeacon, not having a delicate sense of proportion, knew nothing of the helpfulness of humor; moreover, religion was a serious thing, and its servant could not afford to be on intimate terms with the handmaid of frivolity. He worked this thought with what delicacy he could, considering that it bore reproof, but, receiving no reply, he launched immediately into the matter that had brought him there—the urging of discretion on this young man who had undertaken, somewhat recently, one

of the most difficult of charges, a rich city parish, touching on one hand the most tragic need, and on the other bored affluence.

"You state the conservative side of the matter fairly," was all the rector seemed to find it necessary to reply.

The archdeacon confronted the difficulty of making the issue personal with a moment's bewilderment.

"Now, there is Mrs. Morris," he said, at length. "Her brother is one of your oldest friends, and she is one of the wealthiest women in your congregation. Just a little tact would suffice there."

"The abandonment of every one of my own purposes would not suffice," said Thorne thoughtfully. "It would require the adoption of all of her purposes."

The archdeacon had a feeling that perhaps he had made the issue a trifle too personal, but he had never consciously abandoned a purpose because it was made difficult for him.

"It distresses me to hear the judgment of a man holding your position so called in question," he said.

"In much wisdom is much grief," quoted the rector, with entire gravity.

The archdeacon considered this reply, and found it enigmatic. Then, observing that Thorne had swung around in his desk chair and picked up a pile of unanswered letters, the archdeacon rose with a sigh over the infrequent use by these young enthusiasts of the better part of valor. There were times when Thorne gave him the same discomfort he found with Mrs. Carson—one could not be sure how either of them would take things.

As the door of his study closed, the rector's thoughts also turned to Mrs. Carson. Five years before Wrexford Thorne had been called to his present parish, the degenerate heir to the immense Carson fortune had married the dowerless daughter of one of the oldest families in the country. Her world said she had earned her reward when, a few months after the wedding, her husband's father died, and left his son to spend his millions undisturbed.

The young man succeeded in disburs-

ing about one-third of them, but during the process he developed acute mania from what had been eccentric folly. Nobody had ever accused him of the possession of brains. Nobody was surprised when, two years after his marriage, his wife had him confined, by order of court, in a private sanitarium for the hopelessly insane, and his estate put into the hands of trustees competent to manage it.

Nor was there much surprise exhibited when Mrs. Carson's appealing prettiness, and the recklessness she hid under a youthful and ingenuous exterior, kept her own city, and several others, in food for gossip that sometimes approached scandal. For several years rumor was busy with the rapid succession of men on whom Mrs. Carson smiled. For one year—the year Thorne had been there to hear it—rumor had fixed on one man, and persistently connected Mrs. Carson's name with Percy Jeffrey's.

Mrs. Carson nominally belonged to Thorne's church, and even occasionally listened to a service. On one of these occasions he had asked his congregation for money help in his parish-house work, and she had sent him a check that made all other contributions unnecessary. It was a curious arrangement that put in such careless hands so great a power.

And here Thorne paused. He had spoken with Mrs. Carson only three or four times, and each time he had borne away with him an impression of swift and vivid thinking, of eyes that saw below surfaces, of a mind that reached out to the understanding of encountered personality even while withdrawing itself from observation.

Outside his door he heard the voices of the Woman's Auxiliary disbanding after the morning's work. There was the sound of many footsteps on the stairway, and then quiet—a quiet broken by a firm knock at his door.

"Come in," said the rector.

It was Mrs. Morris, her corn-colored hair glowing in carefully preserved tints under a blue motor veil, her excellently controlled figure covered by a blue

motor coat that hid its defects of slight heaviness while lending grace to its outlines.

Thorne rose. Almost subconsciously his lips closed more tightly.

"Is my brother here, Mr. Thorne?" she asked.

"He left some little time ago, Mrs. Morris."

"How provoking! Did he say where he was going? I want to use the automobile."

The rector appeared to hesitate over his answer, and the lady, to whom direct questions were in no way embarrassing, drew an instant conclusion, and voiced it in question form.

"You don't happen to know?"—she had the grace to pause a moment—"if he took Mrs. Carson with him in the machine?"

The rector hesitated no longer. "He was here only for a few minutes, Mrs. Morris, about the vestry meeting tonight."

Mrs. Morris let this noncommittal information sink in a moment, then she sat down in the chair that the archdeacon had lately left.

"May I sit down a minute and talk to you about Percy?" she said.

His permission having been taken for granted before the request, Thorne found no need for answer. He merely seated himself again at his desk, and gave the lady his attention.

"You are one of Percy's best friends, Mr. Thorne, or I should not intrude this on your attention, but I am really much worried over my brother's infatuation for this woman."

She paused, evidently waiting for his reply. Thorne made it brief.

"Would you call it that?" he asked.

"That or worse." Mrs. Morris lifted a chin that massage was keeping firm in outline, and the gesture brought out certain hard lines in her face over which the rector pondered.

"Scarcely worse," he said. "Percy is not naturally treacherous. He is clean in mind and thought."

"Ah, but she is treacherous, and she does not care in the least about the things most women are guided by. Mr.

Thorne, will you not speak to Percy? I have tried to, but he will not let me mention the subject."

"I am afraid my speaking to him would be equally useless," said Thorne. "Men will not speak of these things; it is the woman in it that holds them silent. Percy would consider it an intrusion into his affairs that not even an old friendship would excuse. Is there not some better way?"

The woman looked at him in unresourceful surprise.

"Has there been no girl for whom Percy has cared?" Thorne asked.

Mrs. Morris considered. "Last year"—she hesitated—"it was Laura Whitney. But—she would not do!"

"Would not do! I do not understand you. I do not know a finer girl. Surely she is all you could ask for Percy, Mrs. Morris?"

Mrs. Morris maintained a rare silence, and the rector, accustomed to reading faces, inquired:

"Did anything come between them?"

"I might as well tell you, I suppose," sighed Mrs. Morris. "I disapproved of the thing because she was a working woman. I know her family is good, and her own education passable, but really—a stenographer—and for Percy!"

"But I understand," said Thorne gently, "that she was left fatherless and penniless, and had to take whatever offered. She is not only excellently bred, but very able."

Mrs. Morris shrugged her shoulders. "Of course," she said, "I would have infinitely preferred Miss Whitney to Nadine Carson had I known Nadine would catch him on the rebound. But, you see, I did not know then."

Thorne mused on these comments with their faint quality of underbreeding. Mrs. Morris reflecting that she was safely talking to her rector, continued:

"I have sometimes thought that if the archdeacon and I had not interfered, Percy would have married Miss Whitney. She is good-looking."

"The archdeacon!"

"Well, perhaps I ought not to speak

of it, but the archdeacon saw my predicament with regard to Miss Whitney. We have been pretty good friends for a long time, the archdeacon and I. It is his idea that any attachment can be broken up by judicious ridicule."

The rector endeavored to betray no surprise.

"He told me of the success he had had in one case by saying every time the young man spoke of the young woman: 'She would be good-looking if she were not so fat.' So—er—we— we tried his scheme."

She waited for a reply, but, as there seemed none forthcoming, she concluded:

"But, you see, you cannot work the same scheme on a man twice. And so now that Mrs. Carson is involved, we are quite powerless."

In the face of the blank silence that followed on her confidences, Mrs. Morris had her first feeling of discomfort. Emphatically she did not approve of a man so careful of wasting his words. As the silence continued she rose.

"You think there is nothing that you can do?" she asked stiffly.

The rector turned to her a face carefully blank.

"I will see if there is anything to be done, Mrs. Morris," he said, and opened the door for her.

When she had gone, he crossed the floor to the window, and stared out at the spring sunshine, but it was very certainly not the sunshine that he saw. He saw instead the fine, patient face of the girl Mrs. Morris had spoken of so slightly; he thought of its slow whitening under the unaccustomed hardship of her new business life, of the unselfishness with which she gave her scant spare time to the church work that had been an occupation in the idler days of her father's lifetime. That very night she would come to the church to train a class of working women in shirt-waist making, and toil with them over their unaccustomed stitches, and talk with them in her slow, soft voice—he had watched her many times.

It seemed incredible that a man could

turn from this face, where was written character and loyalty, to that other; and Thorne's mind caught up the image of Nadine Carson. It was a haunting face, subtle in its reserves, clever in what it expressed. The eyes, blue and bored, looked out from under a cloud of nut-brown hair on a world holding no illusions, yet the mouth and chin were soft and girlish.

Thorne acknowledged the quality of fascination such a face might exert on a man, yet the other face was not one to be driven from the mind of a man so easily; not even assisted by "judicious ridicule." There must have been something else.

Thorne came to a sudden decision.

"If there is any speaking to be done," he said, "it shall be to Mrs. Carson. It may interest her to try a new rôle—that of self-sacrifice."

"I met the archdeacon in Thorne's office," said Jeffrey to Mrs. Carson as they drove out into the country in the golden noon sunlight.

"You know," Mrs. Carson had murmured, raising her long veil, now that there were no more curious eyes about her, "I have never liked the archdeacon very much, or your sister, either, for that matter."

Jeffrey watched her wind her veil about the brim of her hat, and then he answered:

"I suppose that everybody is connecting their names as you do. I cannot help but wonder"—and Jeffrey laughed—"what will happen if they ever get to know each other really well."

"Why?" asked Mrs. Carson, and it was not often that Mrs. Carson found it necessary to employ this exacting little monosyllable.

"She thinks that he is intellectual," said Jeffrey. "She takes his long silences for communion with his own mental depths, and his inadequate speech seems to her the hesitancy of true spirituality. I suppose it is his impressive manner. Many women cannot go beyond a manner. But if she ever does—well, she is a bit spiteful, and he will probably render payment.

"He thinks she is generous with her money, which she is not, being her kind of woman." And Jeffrey laughed at the woman beside him, whose generosity was well known. "He believes she is immersed in church work for the good she can do. He will learn better when she has transferred her desire-to-prevail from the church management Thorne has already deprived her of, to himself. You see, one might easily wonder what will happen."

"If one was as reflective as you seem to be on the matter," said Mrs. Carson.

But Jeffrey did not hear her. He was thinking of the time the archdeacon had come to him with a request that he should not make Miss Whitney conspicuous by his attentions; that a wealthy man's following of a working woman would be well construed by neither his world nor hers. On close and indignant questioning, the archdeacon had admitted that he spoke in behalf of the lady most concerned in the matter.

Jeffrey had known Miss Whitney's father, and had felt a very real sympathy for the misfortunes that had overtaken the daughter. He had watched her, fading under the unaccustomed confinement and strain of her new work, with distress. Things had not gone far with them, but they bade fair to do so, until this interview with the archdeacon put a sudden end to the situation.

Mrs. Carson turned her blue eyes on the somber face beside her.

"Percy," she said, "I've many other things for you to be stricken into silence over than the archdeacon."

Jeffrey considered her a moment.

"How did you find out that you did not like him?" he asked, with sudden suspicion. "Surely you do not know him well."

She laughed—a soft little ripple of notes that, with the curves of the childlike mouth, was infinitely seductive.

"What a man's question!" she said. "He came to call on me once, and with much care I extracted the story of his life. A vain man is any woman's game. Some time when I wish to plague your sister he shall be permitted to call again."

Jeffrey pondered over the multiplicity of conquests on which this assurance was built, and felt quite sure that the archdeacon probably would call again if permitted, but he said:

"Are you sure he would come?"

Mrs. Carson pulled the pins from her hat, and laid it in her lap. The wind ruffled her cloud of brown hair into a hundred curling tendrils, and the sun burnished it to bronze. It gave her face an uncertain elfin quality, vastly attractive.

"Well, you see," she made answer, "I could always promise him a check for home missions—if he would come and get it."

"Ah!" said Jeffrey. "There is a rather deadly knowledge behind your almost overwhelming ingenuousness."

And now they were returning in the twilight, after a day in the open together—one of the severe tests of a woman's companionability. It was a test the resourceful woman of the world bore well. Both faces were flushed. To the woman real love was new. To the man all love was interesting, and the pleasure of experimenting with it never palled on him.

"Let us stop some place and dine," he said.

It was dark when the automobile began to thread the city streets. A man may keep his words and deeds within the strict limit of the conventional during an hour, or even two or three hours, with a fascinating woman; but at the end of a whole day with her—and of such a day as these two had spent, lunching, golfing, driving recklessly along deserted roads, dining at a little country inn—the most conventional man is apt to depart from the paths of discretion.

Jeffrey spent the return to the city in the making of reckless plans—plans that very likely would have been carried out but that, at the crossing of a shabby little street, a half square from the church where Jeffrey was due in a few minutes, the force that bends the maddest plan to its own purposes intervened.

Jeffrey, now hurrying to leave Mrs.

Carson at home and keep his appointment with Thorne, saw neither the shabby street nor the swift attempt of a slight figure to elude his machine. There was a stifled cry, and the figure that had almost escaped fell to the ground.

"You've run over something," gasped Mrs. Carson as Jeffrey brought his machine to an abrupt halt.

In a moment Jeffrey had the girl he found lying in the street in his arms. Nadine had sprung to the ground.

"Hurry," said Jeffrey, "before the crowd comes. Go into the parish house. The vestrymen are all there, and Doctor Harding is among them. Tell him while I carry in the girl."

As he entered the doorway with his burden, the doctor and Thorne met him. Mrs. Carson stood mute, watching Jeffrey's whitening face.

"It is Miss Whitney," said Thorne.

They laid her on a couch in the library while the doctor examined her.

"She is unconscious from the fall," he said at length, "but her head is only bruised, I think. Her ankle looks very much as if it were broken. We had better get her home, and then I can be sure. It is not fatal," he reassured the young man; "not even serious if she is well cared for."

"She shall be cared for," said Jeffrey quietly. "I will take her to my own home. She would get no proper care in the boarding house where she lives. Will you come with us, doctor? And will you telephone my sister we are coming, Rex?"

"Yes, I will," said Wrexford Thorne.

"Telephone for a trained nurse, too, Mr. Thorne," said the doctor. "I will give you the address. She should come at once. Is it far to your house, Jeffrey?"

"Five squares," said Percy. "We can take it slowly in the automobile." Then his eye fell on Mrs. Carson. "I will ask Rex to take you home, Nadine," he said, with forgetful use of her first name. "Good night."

Nadine heard Thorne announcing to Mrs. Morris over the telephone Percy's impending arrival. She waited for the

slowly moving automobile to turn the corner, and then she slipped quietly out of the parish house to walk the few squares between the church and her house alone. Thorne caught up with her before she had gone half the distance, and, arriving at her door, asked if he might come in a few minutes.

"I know you are tired, and perhaps upset by this accident, yet I want to speak to you a moment, and I will not stay long."

She assented with a sudden, direct look that gave him a glimpse of one phase of her attractiveness to men, so full it was of understanding. She led the way into a library of shaded lights and low chairs, with books before and about them that importuned one to pause. Crisp magazines ranged their gay covers at one's elbow; and close to a broad couch a bowl of red roses caught the rose colors of rug, and wall, and mahogany into a vivid accented point. Scarlet, and gold, and ivory, and dull blue, books by the hundreds, lined the walls, and brooding over their promise there ran the length of the hearth a deep-toned painting of Lauren's "Lost Illusions."

The man took it all in as part of the atmosphere that surrounded the woman who had created it, and the artist in him paid instant homage to the broad and sumptuous culture that it signified. Mrs. Carson stood looking at him, apparently so simply, yet her first words showed the perception behind the low, bored tones.

"You want to talk to me about—about Miss Whitney, do you not? Will you not sit down?"

Thorne had not meant to talk to her of Miss Whitney, yet, as he looked at her, where she sat under one of the shaded lights, the delicate, tired face seemed to have a promise of spiritual depth he had not believed possible; and he suddenly found himself unable to speak of Jeffrey—unless she should permit it. She had, after all, given him the only way to approach what he wanted to say that could be endured by either of them. He found himself telling her the story of Laura Whitney's narrowed

living, with its economies and its sacrifices, as one would lay an appeal before a benign Power. He spoke to the woman of unlimited means hunting for avenues of usefulness.

And Nadine watched him thoughtfully, probing into character, and, even as it was given her to do, gauging personality; then she said:

"But she is beautiful. She is *das ewig weibliche* itself—the woman needing a home and children for fulfillment. Is not that the solution?"

Thorne paused, almost disconcerted by her accurate interpretation of his thought. Briefly he found words for the relation of Laura Whitney's interrupted romance, though he made no mention of any other name. When he finished, Mrs. Carson sat quietly considering his story. She had that rarest of gifts—the ability to use silence with entire comprehension of its effect.

The rector waited, and, even as he did so, she gravely passed over his story with no comment at all, and went directly to the heart of the matter.

"And you hope that I will follow the lead this accident has given and eliminate myself utterly—to—shall we say—to give Interrupted Romance another chance?"

"It would be kind," said Thorne. "You have so much."

The woman looked about her, and the ennui deepened in her face until it visibly sharpened. All the tragedy of womanhood surfeited with the things the world runs mad to win, and utterly denied the one thing that glorifies living for such a woman, lay in the delicate, tired face—all the folly of gaining the whole world at the price of soul growth shadowed the blue eyes.

"I have so much! I have a wonderful mess of pottage; yes, and there is none of it that can compare to this girl's birthright. I have nothing—nothing in all my life of gold and glitter than can pay me for what you ask me to give up to this girl."

"And what is it to give up," said the rector gently; "not even love?"

"Not even love," Nadine echoed.

"Would that also be little to give up if this thing you call right were in the way?"

"No love would be easy to give up; yet for you, yes, and for every clear-eyed man and woman in the world, even love must be given up if it is right to do so. Not only for the right's sake—but for the love's sake. Wrong sometimes kills love slowly, yet ultimately it is bound to kill it. This man is young, and the world is not full of such women as you. It may be that to-day he gives you one of the many forms of love. Yet you know what this means for you and for him. You are no woman to shut your eyes and say to ultimate catastrophe: 'I did not know.' You know the man has honor—a little untried, but, in its way, adequate. It might perhaps go down before you; it is possible that you represent just that rare combination of allurements and intellect most tempting to such a man; but if it did——"

She interrupted. "These things I know," she said. "You need not describe them to me. There is little loyalty among men to the woman they sacrifice. It comes at length, all of it, to grudging attention and veiled disrespect. It may even be that real love will sacrifice itself, and not the woman who inspires it, and that if one becomes the woman sacrificed, one can believe that one is not the woman loved. Yet, so do we women need love that we are ready to cheat ourselves with its husks if only we may have it."

"And the man," said the rector. "Have you thought of his needs?"

A ghost of a smile lightened her somber eyes. "Do you think, even eliminating love, that I have nothing for the enrichment of a man's life? It is because of the complexity of his needs that he comes to me."

"Yet he comes to you surreptitiously, hiding your place in his life, claiming the stimulation of friendship with you

against his better judgment. How long does a real man endure the deceit such needs involve? Only a little while and then one of two things happens—he leaves it behind him or he deteriorates so that if the woman be such a woman as you are, she can neither endure him nor the alloyed love he has to offer. Will you see this thing happen to this man? Or will you—now—when you can be the one to renew his life and that of a young girl—will you make of this influence you have something helpful and gracious?"

A long silence fell over the rosy, book-strewn room. The woman stared unseeingly at the brooding "Lost Illusions" on the wall before her. The man waited.

Presently she flung out her hand.

"I think you know my answer," she said. "There could be but one."

Thorne rose.

"Yes," he said. "But because he is my friend, I thank you. Will you some day ask some service of me?"

"Perhaps," she said. "Good night."

When he had gone she still sat staring at the picture over the hearth; sat until the shadow of loneliness deepened in all the lines of her subtle, clever face, and spread to the figure almost huddled in the big chair. The meaning of friendship—the vision of what love might be—the upbuilding strength of the ever-present struggle came close to her, importuning her for recognition. But she closed her eyes—to see these things clearly meant the remaking of her life, and she was not ready.

She rose with a petulant little gesture that suggested possible histrionic ability, and moved to her desk. Her pen poised over her paper a moment while she measured probable outcomes, and then it traced a formal little note to the arch-deacon concerning the Children's Hospital, that closed with the proffer of a check.





THE PANTHER'S CUB

By

AGNES and EGERTON CASTLE

C Of course you would not attempt the dance yourself. It's all very well for Ilma, she's young; though, if it comes to that, if I had anything to say to Ilma, she shouldn't do it. A singer should think of her voice. Lord, my dear friend," said the impresario, with his fat chuckle, "if a singer does not think of her voice before her soul, I wouldn't—"

He broke off. The woman opposite to him had yawned in his face; yawned brutally, with a noisy, sigh and a display of teeth, white and strong as those of a young dog.

The Baron De Robecq was not offended, not even taken aback. He paused only because he was essentially a man of business, and he was not going to waste his advice upon unhearing ears. He turned his cigar round and round between his fat, white fingers and waited good-humoredly until the lady's paroxysm had passed. Then, after puffing out a volume of aromatic smoke—Baron De Robecq's cigars were of proverbial quality—he proceeded in precisely the same level intonation with his interrupted sentence:

"I wouldn't give a damn for her."

La Marmora, who was half reclining upon the spare Empire sofa, half supported by her elbow on the small table that divided her from the baron's arm-chair, here gave her long, lithe body a twist that brought her face considerably nearer that of the smoker. Chin on her interlaced fingers, she fixed him for a moment through narrowed lids. Then she spoke with great deliberation:

"Robecq, you may shut up about *Salome*—I'm sick to death of the sound

of the word; I don't care what Ilma does. But I know this: I'm bored—I'm bored," she repeated, on a higher, fuller note. Even in speech, her voice had rich and wonderful inflections; it swelled now like an organ peal. "You haven't got Fritz's talent; you've contrived to bore me with your *Salome*. Ah!" With a sudden movement she flung herself back on the sofa and lay flat, her eyes somberly fixing the ceiling. "Do you know, my friend, that you have given me *Salome* for breakfast, *Salome* for dinner, *Salome* for supper ever since we came to Vienna? I have had it over the ears, and it bores me. Go then and talk of it to Ilma. She's young." The full lips sneered. "She'll take your advice, I dare say. As for me, I'm not sure I shall sing it at all."

Robecq hoisted himself out of the comfortable depth of his seat, and stood looking down at her philosophically.

A short, stout man, in those middle years of life, when the materialist begins to consider comfort superior to pleasure, he was already bald, and the clipped, pointed auburn beard was streaked with gray. To a casual observer, his somewhat heavy face might have seemed merely typical of an easy good nature and a large epicurism. But there were acute intelligence in the glance of the small, quick eyes, and a fine development of brow above them.

A materialist the baron might be; but he was also a man of art, of profound financial and diplomatic capacity.

His English bore curiously the impress of two other tongues; its drawling and emphatic enunciation were transatlantic; while the roll of his gut-

tureals and the uncertainty of his consonants were German.

"Why then, Fulvia," he remarked, after a pause, "we'll give *Salome* a rest. Anyhow, as I told you yesterday, I'm not at all keen on your beginning the score till Fritz is back."

"What did you drag me to this hateful place for, then?"

"My dear friend——"

"You know perfectly well that Vienna has no place for me. What position have I—an opera singer—in Vienna? Ah, the miserable city! Ah, my fine days in St. Petersburg!"

"Let us understand each other, Fulvia. Do you want to be heard at Covent Garden? My Lord," said the man, with a weary laugh, "did you not din it into my ears long enough that I had done nothing for you since I had failed to get you London?"

"Well," she snapped, "London's the only centre for an artist. In London an artist is recognized; she takes rank; she——"

"She is more sought after than a duchess, and no one inquires into her morals," the other interrupted unemotionally. "Granted. You're going to London. But how did I manage it, my dear friend? The syndicate wouldn't have you, not at any price. There was some one wanted to keep you out over there——"

"Oh, confound her! Don't I know?"

"But I got you in on *Salome*—the public will have novelty."

"Aye." The singer reared her superb figure from its lolling attitude; and one hand on her hip sketched a sinuous step. "Let her try *Salome*, with her weight of a ton!"

With his patient drawl, he brought the erratic mind back to the argument:

"And you had to see the performance for yourself, hadn't you?"

But swiftly she attacked him in flank.

"And why did I not create the part? It was your business, *mon cher*? And why, since the matter is so important, did you allow Fritz to go to Carlsbad just now, when I wanted him so badly?"

"Because, if your repetitor is not fit for his work, the prima donna—his gout has to be nursed as carefully as your voice, my dear; have you forgotten that?" Here he suddenly paused. What was the good of talking common sense to such a creature? He began afresh in a soothing voice: "Every fine artist creates her own part, don't forget that. I wanted you to hear Ilma's reading, not to copy her."

Fulvia La Marmora flung herself violently back on her sofa, thrust her fingers into her ears, and gave a short, piercing scream.

"If you mention Ilma again, if I hear one word more about that skinny, squalling little brute—*Mon Dieu*, let her dance! That's what she's fit for, to kick the skirts in a *café chantant* and rap the tambourine. I've heard as good a song through a keyhole!"

The prima donna rolled off the couch, drove her silk-stockinged feet into dilapidated pink slippers, and took a restless turn across the window bow. Imperturbably the man shifted his position to watch her. Behind the blue clouds of tobacco smoke his brain was busily working.

"There's not a woman on the stage can move like that. The Panther—never was better nickname! Why, she is *Salome*, Strauss' *Salome*, the world's *Salome*. If she could have Ilma's head on a charger she'd dance right enough for it, this moment! But it must be this year or never. The body's young enough still, but the voice? I shall be very much mistaken if we don't have to lower the score as it is by half a tone."

La Marmora halted in her feline prowl, and stood staring down into the gay, spring-lit Ring. All at once she cried in an altered tone:

"Come here, Robecq!"

And as the man approached, she pointed dramatically. A carriage had halted before the hotel entrance. Its splendid horses, coroneted panels, servants smart as only Viennese lackeys can be, would all have proclaimed a fashionable and aristocratic owner had not the occupants themselves conclu-

sively settled the point. These were a mother and daughter; "*fine*," in the French sense, both; with delicate pale faces under their spring hats, and that elegant simplicity of attire which demands so expensive a modiste. The girl was fresh as the primroses at her breast, and charming in her freshness; but, contrasted with her mother, had something of the unsatisfying meagerness of a sketch beside a finished painting.

Humoring the singer, after his fashion, the impresario bent to look.

"Is it the hats that take your fancy?" he inquired, in his unctuous voice.

"Idiot!" she said. "Wait a minute; wait! He will be back!"

Even as she spoke, a tall, dark man, as unmistakably English as the ladies in the carriage were of Vienna, emerged from the hotel, and somewhat languidly took a seat opposite to them. Before the carriage drew away with clatter and dash, Robecq's keen glance took a rapid inventory of the countenance of him who had so much interested his *prima donna*. As refined and pale as the women themselves, and as high bred. A young man still, but worn-looking, tired.

"Who is he?" asked La Marmora, in French this time, still with her pointed finger.

Robecq shrugged his shoulders—he could also be French when occasion suited. She moved back to her sofa with her long restless step, dropping a slipper on her way. He picked it up and followed her with it.

"You will catch cold," he said, placing it before her.

"I want to know who it is," she ordered, kicking the slipper away; "I want to know him."

"One can always ask the name in the hall," he conceded patiently.

"Did you see he had no eyes but for the mother? That woman was older than I am, Robecq." Then, with her abrupt change of mood, she burst forth—and her voice had tears in it. "But I'm also a mother. My God, you would grind the heart out of me in this odious career! I am a mother,

Robecq; I want my child, I will have my child, Robecq!" She beat the table with her impatient hand. "I, too, will have my child to drive beside me! I will have a carriage and a pair of chest-nuts, and the little one beside me in the Prater. She shall wear a hat with blue wings in it—the little one."

Her long, green eyes, that had an extraordinary luster between very black lashes, were now suffused.

"I have not seen her for how many—heavens, how many years?"

He reckoned a moment. "Not since Lausanne—getting on for three."

She wailed. "Lausanne! How can you remind me of it? The little innocent! Monsters you are to me, you and Fritz! I will have her telegraphed for to-day, now!"

"Now," said Robecq, assenting with perfect amiability. His cigar, two-thirds smoked, he dropped into the grate, and moved to the door. "I will telegraph," he said.

"As you are going down?" she asked, in mellifluous tones. "Ask of the porter the name of that man."

As Robecq closed the door gently, he laughed.

La Marmora's tactics were elemental.

Baron De Robecq had two principles in life which had carried him from poverty to affluence; from obscurity to the utmost distinction to which a man of his kind could attain. "Never mix pleasure with business." "Nothing was ever done in a hurry that could not have been done better with deliberation."

Madame La Marmora in her eighteen years' professional intercourse with him had been obliged to accept the first of these axioms, though not without a struggle. But to the second she could never adapt herself.

When he returned to the sitting room upon the accomplishment of his errands, he found her raging again. The carpet was strewn with scarce-smoked cigarettes. She paused in the act of striking a fresh match to turn her glare upon him.

"At last! It takes you, then, an eter-

nity to ask a question! Did I not tell you I was boring myself? Did you not understand that?"

Ascending, her wrathful cry broke suddenly into hoarseness. The man raised his eyebrows significantly, then came across the room, took the match from her hand, closed the cigarette box, and slipped it into his tail pocket.

"Hein!" he said then in his crawling voice. "That was a little warning, was it not? Do that once on the boards, my dear—*na!* Only go on as you are going, smoke, excite yourself, scream, and you will do it. 'Tis Robecq tells you so."

There was fear in the still furious glance she flung sideways at him. Her lip trembled. She panted and choked, but Robecq had not spent the years of his manhood in traffic with that most delicate of all commodities—the human voice and its concomitant erratic humanity—without having learned how to deal with his wares. Even at the eleventh hour he could avert the storm.

"It seems," he remarked tranquilly, "that the man is English."

The heaving shoulder turned upon him became still.

"A toff, my dear friend," said Robecq jocularly. "In the embassy here. One Lord Desmond Brooke."

"Lord Desmond——" She repeated the name in her softest note. As by a miracle the suffocating tumult within her had subsided.

"Brother to the Marquis of Sturminster," Robecq proceeded, with unction, "and son of that tremendous old lady known as 'Marcia, Marchioness.'"

"It is the porter told you all that?" she queried.

For the first time that day she smiled. Her rather square-cut lips tilted upward, and the full beauty of her face, somewhat hard and brooding in repose, became revealed as by a ray of sunlight.

"No, Fulvia, no, my dear friend, I happened to have met Sturminster more than once." His eye became reminiscent; a chuckle gently shook him. "I had the honor also of bowing to 'Marcia, Marchioness' once; she didn't

bow to me. These cast-iron old London ladies unbend, most of them, to music, you know; but she's an exception."

The singer made a gesture as if brushing aside an importunate fly.

"What's that to me? Did you ever meet him?"

"No."

"Robecq!" She put her head on one side and opened her narrow eyes wide upon him. Her voice was caressing. He smiled back at her with utter good humor. Such creatures had to be treated like children. A good slap when it was necessary; a sweet or a toy to keep them quiet afterward. La Marmora had had her slap; she should have her sweet.

"But I know Darcy at the embassy," he conceded.

She clapped her hands.

"You're a darling old thing." Then she ran her fingers through her hair reflectively, and sank contentedly back on the cushions of the sofa. "Very well! You will arrange that."

"A supper party?" he suggested.

She drew her brows together.

"A supper party? Ah, I don't know. I'm not going to have it *à la bohémienne*; I'm a great artist. I'm as good as any of the fine ladies here. Aye, and better! Shall I not have my daughter with me, too? You did wire for Fifi? A mother with her daughter! Come, what do you mean with your supper parties? Who do you take me for?"

"A breakfast, then? It won't be quite so easy." He rubbed his grizzled beard. "But one can always try. Oh, yes, of course, I wired for Fifi. And you shall drive up in the carriage with the chestnuts, with Miss Fifi beside you, in a blue-winged hat."

Once more gentle mirth gurgled from him.

"Arrange it, then," she said, with dignity.

During their conversation he had been collecting, first with one foot, then with the other, into a neat little pile, the cigarettes scattered on the floor. This he now ground under his heel,

which execution being accomplished, he went over to the open grand piano and closed it. Then, with the same deliberation he took possession of the score of the opera, "*Salome*," which was lying face downward on the stool.

"It is arranged." He repeated her words. "We shall have a pleasant social time in Vienna, and leave *Salome* until Fritz returns."

CHAPTER II.

Except for one brief spell of emancipation, some three years ago, at Lausanne, Virginia Lovinska, whom her mother nicknamed Fifi, had known no taste of social life since her remote childhood. For many years she had been at school. Singular memories awoke within her as she followed her mother into the restaurant on the way to the baron's breakfast. The very atmosphere of the place, the smell of cigars, food, and flowers, of wine and coffee, recalled scenes of those early Paris days before Fritz, the *herr repetitor*, had entered upon her life with his stern solicitude. Fifi never voluntarily admitted an unkind thought, but she could not altogether feel sorry for the gout that kept Fritz a prisoner away from them.

Yet, reminiscent of those wilder pre-Fritzian times as this morning's experience seemed, the girl was conscious of a difference; not only in her mother, but in her mother's guests; even in the baron's manners. She realized that she had become the daughter of a personage; that this exquisitely attired, rather languid and low-voiced being, would not to-day tear off her hat and thrust the flowers from the table decoration into her hair; that she would not sing the items of the menu card in a high recitative to an admiring, applauding circle; that neither of the two grand English gentlemen would call her "adorable," or "goddess," would clink glasses with her, or hold her hands across the table; that Robecq—yet so much the same Robecq as ever—would not puff cigar smoke into their faces or take the almonds from her mother's

very fingers as roughly as if she were a disobedient child.

To-day all was, indeed, very different. All was decorous to dullness; hardly a word spoken above its fellow, hardly even a laugh. Yet there was something in the air of the place that seemed to get intoxicatingly into Fifi's blood. Perhaps it was the air of Vienna itself; the sunshine, the spring flowers. She was not given to analysis, but she knew herself singularly happy that morning. During the whole of the baron's entertainment, the only approach to excitement was provided by herself; she was awkward, and terribly the schoolgirl.

The baron sat on one side of her; on the other, Mr. Darcy—one of the grand gentlemen; the second sat opposite to her, next her mother. In spite of his enviable post, the girl thought him languid almost to discourtesy. At first, indeed, she was not disposed to think him worth her notice. She saw gray streaks in the wave of crisp black hair that dominated his forehead; and in the insolence of her youth she dubbed him old. He looked so tired, too, and so white; and when her mother addressed him, it seemed such an effort for him to answer that it exasperated her girlish vigor.

But presently she realized that each time she raised her eyes it was to find his glance upon her; not with the caressing kindness with which the baron's gaze so often met hers, or with the bold curiosity which yonder smart officers had displayed when she passed them just now in her mother's wake. These eyes of Lord Desmond had a deep, thoughtful searching in them; and they were wonderfully, unexpectedly blue between very black lashes.

Fifi began to crumble her bread.

Mr. Darcy asked her a question; the kind of question which the budding diplomat who finds himself relegated to a schoolgirl would condescend to put, merely in order not to partake of his meal in utter silence.

"Do you know Vienna well?"

She said she did. And then she said she didn't. Then she shook her head,

and blushed, and laughed at her own stupidity; and caught the deep look fixed upon her from across the table; and, stretching out her hand in vague confusion for her glass, knocked it over. It was quite full—she did not like wine and was too timid to ask for water—the contents ran across the table.

She glanced in terror at her mother, and blushed to agony. It was then Lord Desmond bent over, and spoke to her for the first time.

"A libation to the gods—for luck!" he said, and smiled—also for the first time.

The smile lit up his pale face with an indescribable pleasantness. Fifi, who had felt miserable to tears under a single dagger glance of her mother's, had a sudden sense of comfort and support, which all the baron's purring assurances failed to produce. La Marmora was now smiling, too.

"Don't worry, *ma Fifi*," she said tenderly. "As Lord Desmond says, it is luck." She turned to the pale man. "One must make allowances for a schoolgirl."

When she had swallowed her coffee, Madame La Marmora declared that she had a thousand engagements and must depart with her *petite*.

"We promised the Gräfin, did we not, darling?"

Fifi stared. She had heard of no Gräfin. But Robecq created a useful diversion by pleading unctuously for more of the ladies' company.

La Marmora had quite the right tone of distinguished amiability as she refused. She was enjoying her rôle of *grande dame*.

"But it is not good-by! Au revoir, I hope." She turned to Robecq, while her hand lingered in the Englishman's loose clasp. "Perhaps," she said condescendingly, "you will bring your friends to dine with me one night before we leave."

Mr. Darcy, much injured that he had received so little attention from the handsome singer, forgot his manners in an abrupt disclaimer. He was very sorry, he was engaged every evening far ahead.

"Thanks," Lord Desmond said slowly, in his turn. "Yes, I should like to come."

There was a lightning triumph under La Marmora's heavy lids. But she maintained her dignity; dropped the chill fingers with a little friendly pressure; and with the true aristocratic indifference of tone ordered the impresario to "arrange that, my good baron. Thursday or Friday, to Lord Desmond's choice."

Fifi's heart had a strange flutter as they moved to the door; even as Lord Desmond had accepted, again he had looked at her.

"I say, Brooke," said Mr. Darcy, turning a sulky pink face upon his companion after they had paced the Kärtner Strasse some time in silence. "You're bowled over pretty quick, aren't you? I think I'd rather see her from a box myself."

"Oh, really?" commented the secretary of legation.

"As for me, of course," grumbled the attaché, full of his recently acquired local *savoir-faire*. "I only came to-day to oblige old Robecq, who isn't a bad sort; but—once is enough, thank you. I don't want to be mixed up with that kind of people. It is all very fine in London. But in Vienna, my dear fellow!"

"Oh, damn Vienna!" said Desmond Brooke unexpectedly, but without an inflection in his weary voice. "Don't I know Vienna? Oh, Lord, don't I know it, all these years?"

CHAPTER III.

Although no man is a hero to his valet, it is quite possible for a woman to be heroine to her maid. To Eliza, cross-grained, ugly, shrewish Eliza, who knew every secret of her mistress' beauty, every twist of her character, La Marmora had remained, after sixteen years' experience, something to be worshiped with a doglike devotion, to be humored and borne with in maternal patience.

La Marmora, true to her type, apart

from some certain inevitable and pardonable explosions, was affable to her servants. "My good Eliza," "My old Eliza" would trip affectionately off her tongue in connection with her orders. In moments of depression she had wept against her shoulder: "There is but thee to love me in the world." A truer statement perhaps than many that the singer was wont to make, though it would have been the last she herself could have believed.

And if she was the only person in the world to love her mistress unreservedly, it seemed as if this strange love of Eliza's had turned all her other feelings in the direction of hate. She hated Robecq because of the contemptuous clear-sightedness which underlay all his dealings with the singer. She hated the fluctuating household, because of its comments and sneers, its discoveries and its inventions. She had always hated Virginia; hated her as a child, in her jealousy of those spasmodic maternal outbursts; hated her worse in her blooming girlhood for its contrast with the beauty of La Marmora which she, better than any one, knew was on the wane. But, above every one she hated Fritz; and, while she hated, she feared him. Fear is a passion which gives an edge to all the other passions, and incomparably heightens their object.

On the evening of the Friday when Madame La Marmora expected Lord Desmond to dinner, Eliza had some trying hours. Ten times her mistress changed her mind with regard to her dress. She did not want to make herself too beautiful; nor yet too dowdy; nor, heavens, an eccentricity!

She sat before the mirror, her wonderful hair unbound, drumming on the table and biting her lip. Mutely the maid laid each rejected garment on the bed.

"What does madame say to her toilet—Revel—the black crape?"

"My black! So that I may look like a mute?"

But Eliza saw in her lady's eye that the suggestion had struck a sympathetic chord; and, in her incomparable way, was proceeding silently to carry it out,

when a knock at the outer door summoned her in another direction.

"What is it now?" screamed the Panther.

"It is a letter, madame."

"A letter! Bring it here!"

Madame had turned white. "The creature! He is not coming!" All day the dread of this had haunted her. "But give it, then!" She snatched the missive and drew a quick breath. "Ah! It is only Robecq. What does he want now? The imbecile!"

What Robecq wanted was set forth in four lines. He deplored that he was unable to secure a fourth to dinner that night to his dear friend's order; and advised that Miss Fifi should be summoned to dine down, after all—three being an awkward number. He was devotedly hers, Jean De Robecq.

"Ah, the imbecile!" said La Marmora again; but she said it lightly.

Compared to the calamity she had dreaded, this was a small contretemps. She had not wanted to have Fifi, "on the top of her," that night. No reasonable people were ever at ease with a long-legged schoolgirl, all ears and eyes and blushes, playing nonconductor to the most interesting conversation. But three, that was true, was an awkward number; and Fifi's presence was better than a Robecq perpetually cutting in, with his dominating drawl, his fund of anecdote, his fat chuckle. He should occupy himself with Fifi—so be it—since he had failed in so simple a task.

She could not do without him, or she would remorselessly have revoked her invitation. It was part of her program to sing a little in the evening, and Robecq must accompany her. After Fritz—a long way after—there was only one who could do this for her, and it was Robecq.

"Eliza!"

"Madame?"

"Tell Fifi to come here—quick! But quick!"

"Ah!" cried La Marmora, as Eliza returned at last, pushing her mistress' daughter before her into the room with much the same spiteful hand that had

boxed and shaken in bygone days. "Ah, mademoiselle, you keep me waiting!"

The mother broke off, stared, and added, in an altered voice:

"What is this? You have been crying?"

The sobs struggling in Fifi's throat prevented her reply. But the mother had seen swollen features, reddened eyelids. The clouds rolled away from her face.

"Well! You are to dine down, after all. See now what a monster you have made of yourself! Does one cry because one is not yet in society? Come, dress, dress! Your white chiffon and green sash. Fly! Get a chambermaid to help you."

She turned, radiant once more, to her mirror, as the door closed upon Fifi's exit.

The girl halted a minute in the passage to try and control the fresh rush of tears. Fate was playing her one trick after another; she was to come down, to be at the dinner, after all, and she had made a fright of herself for those blue eyes to see. She could not master the sob that rose in her throat.

"Listen to her," said the singer blithely. "She is crying again, I declare!"

Eliza had a sympathetic grin. She knew why her mistress was pleased; was she not herself pleased for the same reason?

"Yes," said La Marmora, "I shall wear the black crape—and the emeralds, just the emeralds."

Lord Desmond had entered the room, but a few seconds before Fifi. In fact she had waited, with beating heart, at a corner of the passage, to watch him, tall, pale, fatigued, pass slowly in after the waiter.

She was not witness, therefore, of his first look round the room and of the blankness that succeeded its searching; of the almost insulting indifference—if anything so negative as his manner could be called insulting—with which he responded to his hostess' greetings. But what she did see was the swift lighting up of those blue eyes

upon her entrance. Her own had found his, unerringly, from the threshold. It was but a momentary flash between them, for as swiftly his eyelids had dropped.

But, to Fifi, grown woman in all her childish ignorance, it was as sudden light, sudden warmth, sudden intoxication.

"Miss Fifi!" came the baron's bland voice at her ear. "I'm de-lighted to see you down."

His eyes were saying something else—something that had kinship with what Desmond's had said; that remote kinship which the glow of a coal fire may have with the flame of sunrise.

"But you are wonderful, child," he added, under his voice.

She caught the words, unresentful of the familiarity—was he not, from all time, a kind of old uncle?—unmindful of the something new and distinctly non-avuncular, which had crept into his mien.

She felt a new Fifi to-night; miles distant from the schoolgirl that had flung herself with such inner vows of devotion into her mother's arms only ten days ago. She had thought, then, that if fate allowed her to be a daughter she would ask no more. Now her whole being demanded something else, as with great cries and a turmoil of restlessness. What? She was too much of a child, too undeveloped in her womanhood, to know how to formulate it even to herself; but for another such look from those blue eyes she felt that she would have faced all the maternal angers. It was not that she loved less, trusted less the beautiful, the wonderful being whose daughter it was her privilege to be, but that a feeling, deeper and more overpowering, was sweeping in upon her life.

If she was new to herself, she seemed also to present a new aspect to the singer. More than once during the course of that evening, La Marmora's regard fixed itself upon her daughter, not with the panther flash, that meant after all but the passing of an animal emotion, but with the brooding look that boded infinitely more mischief. It

was a look that weighed, and pondered, and decided. It had in it something far beyond anger. Jealousy, the love-killer, lurked there.

Yet it but lurked. In the denseness of a magnificent egoism, it was yet impersonal; jealousy of maturity for youth; of the painted face for the matchless bloom of spring; of the sordidly experienced for this ignorance, this innocence, this virginity.

CHAPTER IV.

In spite of the provided fourth, it was, after all, Robecq who dominated the conversation during the meal. The singer, unsure of her ground, and cautious in her set purpose, was picking her steps, as it were; she kept her voice to an undertone and spoke little; adopted a weary air, almost as if in imitation of that of her guest. But through her narrowed lids those long lustrous green eyes flung long, slow looks upon Lord Desmond.

Through his drawling, desultory talk, the impresario surveyed her with feelings that began in amusement and ended in uneasiness. To see the Panther regard her prey, all her claws in, all purr and sleekness and sinuosity—that was amusing. But behind these feline graces his discerning and experienced gaze was aware of the steel of the muscles, the sharpness of the indrawn claws, the set and terrible determination.

Any prima donna who respects herself must have her established admirers; it is a necessary stimulus to her art, and a wholesome, if she is careful to put her voice first among her cares. La Marmora had had a many-colored, polygot collection, but she had never taken any of them with seriousness, since an episode with a poor young Pole, with the exception of one stormy experience with a Russian grand duke.

The impresario believed that she had had her lesson; that she had learned the incompatibility of ambition and *la grande passion*; that the folly would never be repeated. He had, therefore, encouraged what he believed to be a

mere useful relaxation for the sullen woman who was boring herself. Gayly, indeed, had he facilitated the necessary introduction, believing that *Salome* would reap the benefit of renewed zest for life. A *Salome* who was boring herself! He had shuddered at the thought.

But to-night, as has been said, he was growing uneasy. The development of that sudden fancy, born of a chance glance out of a hotel window, threatened to become dangerous. He told himself that he ought to have known better the creature he had dealt with so long; to have known the incredible extravagances of which, with youth slipping from them, such women as Fulvia were capable; to have known that one whose heart had been as a dried fig all her life may be seized with a passion as devastating as a prairie fire—horrible Nemesis of the love she has blasphemed.

And this was the crucial year of La Marmora's career. By *Salome* she would stand or fall in London. And with her his own credit. London was yet unconquered by him, and La Marmora was his conquering army.

"I have made a mistake and I shall have to steer precious carefully," he was thinking. "Yes, precious carefully! I shall have to deal with her precious carefully. Humor her—humor her, at least until Fritz returns, Fritz, the Panther tamer."

Then his furtive glance wandered to the young crowned head on the other side of him—the divine young head that seemed to be encircled with a halo of radiance and beauty. Here was another complication. But it was a complication that he could not regret; nay, it was one which every moment made him more anxious to solve for himself, and that in a manner so agreeable that even his strong head reeled a little as he pondered on it.

The dinner was served in the prima donna's sitting room, at a small round table. The lights overhanging it were discreetly shaded. The room itself was unusually pretty and artistic for a hotel, Empire in style, with white pan-

eled walls picked out delicately in gold. There was a set of furniture, genuine "of the period," upholstered in dim green; the chairs had lions' heads and bosses of ormolu.

It was all a little too simple for La Marmora's taste. But, on hearing that the apartment was generally reserved for princely guests, she had decided that no other would suit her. She had, however, to-night, determined to make up for what she considered its shortcomings by an extravagance of flowers.

"I will have flowers—flowers everywhere, Robecq," she commanded. "What's that you say? Lily of the valley? No! Give me carnations—the deep carmine sort. And roses, red ones, Robecq. Roses everywhere!"

Roses therefore glowed in every corner; sheaves of them; superb roses, long-stalked, velvet-petaled, fire-hearted, mirrored themselves on the mantelshelf, on the tables. Carnations warred with them in spicier breath and ruddier flame. A bowl in the centre of the dining table was filled with specimen blossoms of that rose the crimson of which is so deep as to be nearly black; the scent of which is so unutterably sweet as to be almost beyond the compass of sense.

La Marmora, in her emeralds and her black dress, might have seemed of beauty wonderful enough against a background so subtly contrived to set it off, to turn any man's head. But the two who sat with her to-night were singularly proof. Robecq had read her through long ago, and found the page scarce worth the perusal. Lord Desmond had had one measuring glance for her, as she sat down beside him.

She had bent for a moment to inhale the soul of a rose, and over it their eyes had met. Paling under the exquisite artifice of her bloom, she had fixed him, her nostrils fluttering, her breast heaving. He had looked away from her, without a flicker of expression on his face. After that, he had not raised his eyes higher than her hand when forced to address her—but mostly he had looked at his plate.

Toward the end of the meal the im-

presario and his prima donna drifted into a private discussion which threatened to shake the lady out of her assumed aristocracy of repose. Roused from her languorous absorption, she rolled an eye, lively with anger, oblivious of her guest.

It was then Lord Desmond turned at last toward Fifi. She had sat, most of the time, in a whirl of excitement, mute, scarce conscious of what was going on about her, of anything but the one presence. Absently she was playing with a flower that lay loose before her plate.

As the deep glance sought her, confusion overcame her; and to conceal it she pretended in her turn to be absorbed in inhaling the scent.

"Don't!" said Lord Desmond, in a low voice.

She turned a startled, wide-eyed gaze upon him. "Those roses are abominable," he went on. "Keep to the lily of the valley!"

Again she questioned, with those appealing eyes.

"The white and green lily of the valley," went on the man, speaking quick and low, "with its sharp, fresh scent—its clean scent—instead of all this heavy, horrible sweetness. Keep to the lily of the valley."

"But I haven't any!" her voice rang out.

Both her mother and Robecq stopped in their wrangle to look at her. And Lord Desmond said no more. His eyes went back to his plate.

At dessert the girl mustered courage to speak to the Englishman on her own account.

"Do you like emeralds?"

"I beg your pardon?"

He gave her his attention so quickly that she felt her silly shyness rushing upon her again; to cover it she grew bold.

"The emeralds of my mamma—I like them best of all her jewels—it was my papa gave them to her."

No sooner had she said the words than in some inexplicable way she had a sense of having committed an enormity.

Lord Desmond had not as much as shifted his gaze to glance at the green fire that lapped La Marmora's columned throat.

Robecq's fingers were in his beard.

"Don't you think we've had enough food?" said the singer, rising abruptly. "Lord Desmond"—her voice sank from its harsh vibration to the undertone that the baron called her purr—"I will perhaps sing you a little song by and by. Sit on the sofa, here, with your cigarette, and tell me what I shall sing."

Royalty reverses all the usual social rules, invites itself to other people's houses, chooses the guests it will meet there. The kings and queens of art confer their favors much in the same way. It is the last solecism to ask them for what it is etiquette to press the dilettante to give. So La Marmora regally proposed to sing. No millionaire could have bought the grace of her; indeed, it was hardly hers to give, and she shot defiance at her manager even as she spoke.

"Not for an hour at least," was the latter's only comment, and dryly enough given.

"If I refuse," he thought, "she will make me a scene afterward, and scream—anything is better than that she should scream."

He had a certain rueful, yet humorous revenge in observing the extreme moderation of Lord Desmond's gratitude.

"She will do nothing with him," he said to himself. "Poor Fulvia!"

But she had to be humored. And so, to humor her, he took the not disagreeable course of drawing Fifi with him to the piano, and making her help him in his selection of songs for the occasion.

"Something that won't try mamma's voice, after those peaches, eh, Fifi? Something soothing and cradley."

He sat on the piano stool, and ran his stubby fingers over the keys with a touch as soft as velvet.

"No, Robecq, no!" cried the prima donna roundly, from the sofa.

She was tingling to her finger tips with impatience. What! For an hour

and a half she had looked her loveliest and longest, smiled her sweetest, spoken her most dulcet! And this stock sat, twisting his cigarette between his pale fingers, with never a glance, scarce even a monosyllable! He had moved away from her, too, as she moved toward him, to the very limit of the sofa.

Englishmen! Englishmen were dense, not like your Spaniard, your Pole, or your Frenchman, who in a look find a whole speech, in an intonation an avowal, in a sigh a surrender.

One had to put the dots on the i's with Englishmen, she told herself.

"No, Robecq, not that mawkish thing. I'll have—I'll have that song of Hahn's!" She rose as she spoke and swept across the parquet floor.

The manager's eyebrows went up, wrinkling into his forehead. He shrugged his shoulders.

"With the high A!" he murmured.

But he knew that swish of drapery. It was the Panther lashing her tail. He allowed her, resignedly, to look for the piece. She scattered music like autumn leaves before she placed it on the desk.

Meanwhile, his fingers ran on with the *Wiegenlied*.

"Stop it," she said, between her teeth. "I'm not maternal to-night!"

Virginia caught the words; all the blood from her wounded heart seemed to rush to her face.

"Go to bed," continued the mother. She tried to give the order a tone of gay solicitude. "Little girls must have their beauty sleep."

"Not at all," drawled Robecq. "Miss Fifi is going to stop and listen to mamma's singing."

He flung open the first page of the song as he spoke, and struck a chord. It was not the prescribed hour yet; but in this wild-beast mood, the poor man could only repeat to himself: "The Panther must be humored."

Fifi went over to the farthest corner of the room, and sat on a high chair, in the shade of the curtain, looking out unseeingly into the street and fighting back her tears.

La Marmora turned her back on the

piano, and fixed her gaze upon Lord Desmond. He had never heard her sing before, and she was going to sing to him, to him alone as never she had sung for fame or money.

The first liquid notes rang out. After a second or two the man dropped his cigarette, and shaded his face with his hand. The singer's heart rioted in triumph; its pulsation beat into the passionate ecstasy of the melody.

Little did she guess that, under the penthouse of those lax fingers, his deep, tired eyes were seeking the young figure in the window; that he was dreaming only of her, so white and green and fresh against roses and carnations.

CHAPTER V.

"Robecq," said the prima donna, in her most strident tone, "you never did anything more idiotic than when you sent for that long-legged child to join us. Here! Here! Why, she makes me blush ten times a day. She was frankly impossible, last night. Pack her back! It's not right to interfere with her studies, anyhow. Without Fritz knowing, too. He'll be furious. How am I to get up *Salome* if Fritz is furious?"

The baron, with his round legs slightly apart, stood gazing down at the speaker. Fulvia was in elaborate spring toilet; and though she could not keep the vibrating harshness from her voice, she was holding herself well under control. But her eyes glittered between the long lids and her hand moved restlessly among the odds and ends of the table beside her.

He passed his fingers along his beard and pursed his lips; then he very deliberately sat down. Through the open window the hum of the joyous afternoon hour on the Ring rose through the spring air, and little gusts of wind stirred the heavy flower-filled atmosphere of the room.

"So," said Robecq, as he sat down, "that's why you sent for me in such a hurry? You've had enough of Miss Fifi already!"

Fulvia rolled her beautiful dyed head

impatiently on the cushioned top of her chair. With her curious animal instinct she scented opposition. But she did not want to make a scene; she was going to drive in the Prater, and she wanted to look her best.

"I've told Eliza to get her trunks ready," she answered briefly, "and you're to find a chaperon for her, and she's to take the night train. I've wired to Madame Aubert."

Again Robecq pondered, his thick fingers on his beard. He had expected this. She was not the woman to submit long to the proximity of blooming girlhood, even had no Lord Desmond been within her horizon.

The sudden desire to play *grande dame*, and the devoted mother at one and the same time was bound to go the way of all her emotional impulses, once she discovered that her child's April had ripened into May, and that she was no longer a perfect foil, but a possible standard of undesirable comparison.

He had anticipated this; what he had not anticipated was that her jealous vanity should be so soon on the alert; he had placed more reliance on her immeasurable conceit.

Poor child! So, she had made her mother blush? Well, although he doubted whether the mother had ever possessed the grace of blushing, it was possible and even a little human for the Panther to feel that such innocence would be better kept apart from her present plans.

In his deliberate way he thrashed out each proposition in turn before speaking; and decided that all these reasons were at work with almost equal strength.

He shook his head mentally over the shortsighted policy of the woman in her sudden violent attraction. She might sweep a boy off his feet, but with a man like this fastidious roué! The Panther was tired already of stalking her prey; she wanted to spring—after three days' acquaintance! She would spring—and miss—and then "What of *Salome*?" If Fifi's proximity should delay the spring, it was

another reason for not allowing her to depart.

"I don't think," the slow, treacherous voice announced at last, "that we can let Eliza go on with the packing."

"How?" snarled the lady, with quick stiffening of her back. Her eyes flashed. She sat up suddenly. "Understand me, Robecq. We're going to England next week, aren't we?"

"Are we? You told me yesterday that nothing would induce you to go back to England till the last possible moment."

"I've changed my mind." She struggled to speak quietly. "Let us be reasonable! Must I not be in England, to be settled and rested before the rehearsals begin? I want a house of my own over there. A house where I can receive; I am sick of hotels. We are going next week."

"Well, I've no objection—no very great objection to next week—only it would have been better to wait for Fritz here. But if you give me a good reason—a real reason for this hurry why—"

His cynical, small eyes were upon her. A moment her own glance wavered from them; then, with a jerk, she faced him; staring, speaking with a brutal frankness:

"Lord Desmond is going to London Monday on leave—didn't you hear him say so last night?"

"No, my dear," said the manager imperturbably. "If I had heard that I should not have asked. Well, I repeat I have no objection. Miss Fifi will help you nicely to settle into the London house."

"I won't take her to England; I won't, and that's all about it. Have I not told you she's got to go back to school?"

"I think Miss Fifi has done with school."

"Robecq!" she warned. It was almost a growl in the throat.

"My dear friend, be reasonable," he pursued, in his steady way. "She is too old for school—much too old."

"Seventeen—eighteen," she panted. "How dare you?"

"We'll call it eighteen, if you like.

Eighteen's a very good age for a young woman—like Miss Fifi—to be married."

She sprang up. "Robecq!" She began on a scream of fury.

He raised his fat forefinger warningly for a moment or two, and then gently tapped his throat.

"You'll do that once too often, my dear," he said. "I've told you so before."

The effervescence of her wrath vanished as suddenly as bubbles of boiling milk on the immersion of the spoon. She sat down again.

"Robecq, you are a brute." It was plaintively, almost tearfully, uttered.

He laid his hands on his knees and leaned over to her.

"Don't you think it would be rather a good thing—for everybody—if Miss Fifi were married?"

He paused to let the idea sink in. He saw her hesitate upon it. Doubt succeeded anger.

"If your maternal anxiety were completely satisfied"—there was a faintly sarcastic twinkle in his eye, but his voice retained its businesslike inflection—"if you knew her husband to be a kind man, a safe man, a very well-to-do man, wouldn't it be the very best way, wouldn't it relieve you of some responsibility, remove some possible future complication? You can't much longer keep a fine, well-grown young woman in those short skirts and baby blouses without making yourself supremely ridiculous. And if you sent her back to school, it will get about, my dear, and it won't make the world think you any younger or any nicer."

The singer's foot began to tap; her color was fluctuating.

"And this rich man, this safe man, this kind man, this paragon—where are you going to find him for me?"

"He is found," said the impresario quietly.

She stared at him. Then as his meaning dawned upon her she broke into laughter—the coarse, taunting laugh of the child of the gutter.

"You! You, my poor old Robecq! You?"

In the very middle of her laughter

her vanity cried out. The Maypole! To succeed where she, conquering Fulvia, had failed! A moment she looked at him as if she could have stabbed him.

"You are mad. You, and that child! And the other two? What of them?"

The prosperous ruddiness on the baron's plump cheek deepened to purple. It was the only sign of annoyance that he permitted himself to show.

"You would naturally feel uneasiness on the subject of any illegality," he remarked, with a kind of genial sarcasm. "But you may put your mind at rest. As an American citizen, both my divorces have been most strictly conducted according to every formality required by the law. And I have, in either case, I am glad to say, nothing to reproach myself with. Besides which my first dear wife, I regret to say, passed away last autumn. She never was very strong."

He broke off: she was not listening. With knitted brows, La Marmora, whose anger had cooled once more as suddenly as it had waxed hot, was revolving in her crude mind the value to herself of the extraordinary proposition. The long-legged girl, with her insolent youth, out of her way. A hold for life upon the rich and powerful man before her.

Suddenly she rose and laid her hand on his shoulder.

"Ah, but there's Fritz."

He wheeled on his chair to fling a searching look at her.

"Fritz? What has he got to say to it?"

"He's always interfering," she said, in a strangled whisper. "Robecq, you will have to be quick, quick, before Fritz comes back."

She took a stride toward the door, as if hurrying to immediate action. He caught her back by the skirt.

"Now, look here, Fulvia." He rose as he spoke—a tone of mastery, foreign to his persuasive accents, rang in his voice. "I'll manage this my own way, do you hear? For one thing, I won't have the child hurried; and, if Fritz interferes I'll deal with Fritz."

His eye was still upon her. There was a hint of fear of him also in her glance, as she shifted it uneasily from his scrutiny.

"At least," she said sullenly, "permit me to stop packing Fifi's things."

"Certainly," he conceded, all urbanity again. "And if you've nothing better to do this afternoon, my dear, you might get your daughter some long clothes." He laughed gently. "Some garments to suit a charming young lady of nearly"—he paused—"twenty-one."

CHAPTER VI.

In the artistic circles of London, where everything connected with the new *Salome*, with the great Marmora who was at last to be heard there, was a matter for eager discussion, the question of her alleged latest admirer became current talk.

"Was there not a grand duke on the tapis? That was an old story! The last is Lord Desmond Brooke. Haven't you heard?"

Then, sporadically, like measles, the gossip was all over the town.

Sir Joseph Warren-Smith, for instance, heard it at the Conservative. When "Marcia Marchioness"—as the great dowager, the mother-in-law of this distinguished person, was irreverently dubbed—sent a note round to her dear Mr. Vere Hamilton, in Queen Anne's Mansions, begging him to call in the evening, for there was a matter upon which she urgently needed his valued assistance, he was already sufficiently in possession of the facts to guess what the matter was.

On his way to Lowndes Square he beheld approaching the plump, well-groomed, porcine figure and face of his familiar acquaintance, Mr. Philip Scott, the admired musical critic and dilettante. The latter stopped and wagged his tight-gloved hand in flapping greeting.

"How do, Verie? Gay as ever, eh? A rendezvous, I'll wager, by your haste. Oh, you dog!"

This was Mr. Philip Scott's facetious way. Mr. Vere Hamilton, be it

said, was well known as the most strait-laced of little, elderly gentlemen. But he had a weakness—his only weakness was of the most respectable kind—it was the peerage. He could not resist stopping to inform Mr. Scott whither his steps were bent.

"And dear old Lady Sturminster most particularly begged me to come round at once," he concluded.

The other pursed his lips.

"You'll find them in a rare stew about that scamp Desmond," he opined "Jove, what a fellow it is! Nothing less than La Marmora! Upon my soul, he's got courage. She's a glorious creature. But La Marmora, prrr! I'd die of fright, if I were in his shoes. Ever seen her, Verie? Oh, she's a glorious creature! Come with me down to Branksome; I'll introduce you."

Mr. Hamilton had a genuine shiver as he trotted away from the suggestion.

A mouse-gray, amiable, beaverlike old gentleman; who, if shocked at some of the doings of his dear friends in the peerage, was yet always benevolently and conscientiously anxious to assist in the reclamation of the aristocratic sinner. It was by no means the first time that he had been summoned by some coroneted elderly lady, distraught at the doings of some irresponsible scion of the family.

The Dowager Marchioness of Sturminster was one of a fast disappearing type. From the stronghold of her early Victorian surroundings, at war with the progressive world and all its theories and doings, she yet made her influence felt upon it; was still a power in it, more by virtue of personality than by reason of her rank and connection. Well past seventy as she was, there gleamed an unquenchable vitality in her pale gray eye. In the thick bands of hair, smoothed down in swelling puffs over her ears, not a gray strand; they were of a horrible sandy hue that owed nothing to artifice. These were invariably crowned with a flat agglomeration of lace and black riband.

She had never been handsome; she

had never been even pleasant-looking; she had never known how to dress herself; she was not in the least brilliant of conversation; her ideals, her principles were narrow and uncompromising. Her religion combined a certain Puritan self-assertiveness with a truly Erastian finality; withal a deep ingrain of worldliness which tinged her every thought and her whole outlook on life; she would be as repellent to the plebeian as to the peccant.

Needless to say that she had innumerable toadies; that her only daughter was a weak-minded nonentity; that both her sons were notorious, even in this rapid age, for the fastness of their living: one a spendthrift, the other a roué.

No sooner was Mr. Vere Hamilton ushered into the room in Lowndes Square than he became aware that he had indeed been summoned to a family conclave.

Here was Lady Alice Warren-Smith rolling her pale, frightened eyes at him from the chair beside her mother; it was an easy-chair, but she sat bolt upright to mark her deference. And here was Sir Joseph Warren-Smith, Baronet, J. P., M. P., her worthy, wealthy, vulgar spouse, whom the dowager had insisted upon her accepting, and whom she treated, with much system, with far less respect than she did her butler. An obese man this, sitting on the edge of a high chair, checking a tendency to call his mother-in-law "my lady."

The dowager extended a cold, wrinkled hand, and smiled a faint welcome.

"How do you do, Mr. Hamilton? It is very good of you to come, I'm sure. Sit down, won't you? Sir Joseph, a chair for Mr. Hamilton."

"Joseph!" said Lady Alice warningly.

Her husband bullied her pompously at home; but in her mother's house she was still his unconquerable superior. Poor Joseph hurried to advance the Berlin woolwork atrocity he was himself sitting on.

The dowager was not one to beat about the bush.

"I've just heard the most shocking news of Desmond," she began. "Alice heard it at the Peterboroughs. Sir Joseph heard it—in the City. It's all over the place. I see you know it, too."

She broke off and drew down her long upper lip over her teeth with a kind of gloomy triumph.

"I have heard—rumors——" said the distressed Mr. Hamilton.

"Shocking!" said Sir Joseph.

Lady Alice drew her mouth down in imitation of her mother's.

"It seems," said this latter, taking up the thread again, "that the creature has come over from Vienna for her season and taken a place on the river, and that my wretched son motors down every day. Joseph tells me there was a paragraph about it in one of these scurrilous picture papers."

The informant wagged his head, encouraged by that rare mark of favor, the dropping of the prefix to his name.

"My attention was drawn to it; I don't, as a rule, open these—papers," said he, lifting a protesting hand. "I thought the family ought to know."

His mother-in-law cut in rudely upon this explanation, and he coughed apologetically, to show that so far from bearing malice he recognized it was his mistake.

"It's not my way," the old lady was saying, "as you know, Mr. Hamilton, to take notice of idle or offensive gossip. It is natural, I suppose, that young men, in my son's position, should be talked about; but I understand that the creature in question is extremely notorious." Indescribable was the arrogance of the dowager's eye and voice when she spoke of her son's social eminence; equally indescribable the cold disdain of her reference to "the creature." "And there is my son's diplomatic position to consider. It may seriously injure his prospects, if this scandalous tittle-tattle continues."

Vere Hamilton really felt very much distressed.

"I assure you," he said, "that not only I shall make a point of contradicting any rumors that I hear, but——"

"What good will that do?" asked his

hostess, with her usual ruthlessness. "What we've got to find out is how much truth there is in the whole thing. I am told you can't open a paper without seeing her photograph. I believe the creature's an opera singer or something of that kind, and they're advertising her, or she's advertising herself. She must be easy enough to find—at least, for gentlemen." She showed her long, yellow teeth in a withering smile. Then she leaned back in her chair, and added with finality: "You've got to find out for me, Mr. Hamilton."

"I!" cried the little gray gentleman, in a tremendous flutter. He remembered Scott's airy proposition of a few minutes before, and blushed to the roots of his hair with quite a sense of guilt. It was, indeed, easy for gentlemen!

She looked upon his embarrassment with a hard eye, at the back of which there was a remote and icy gleam of humor.

"You'd better go to the creature's house and see for yourself." She paused, to let the full bearing of her mandate be grasped; and then added, with once again that arctic glint of amusement: "Joseph will go with you."

The baronet gave a leap on his chair, accompanied with a gasp.

"My lady——" he began, only to break off with his apologetic cough.

"Oh, mamma!" murmured Lady Alice. It was a very meek protest; but even that brought the protuberant gray eye slowly upon her, and she quailed.

"Of course, my dear, if you're afraid to trust Joseph——"

"Oh, mamma—oh, no, mamma! Joseph will certainly do what he can!"

The wife frowned at her husband with a nod and a grimace, stimulating him to speak for himself. The poor man cleared his throat and echoed the conjugal "Certainly" in no very certain voice. A gloved hand laid before his mouth—for that expressive cough of his was again in requisition, he turned a piteous glance upon Vere Hamilton.

The latter was looking very dubious himself. To go and visit a far-famed prima donna upon a laudable errand was an alarming but not altogether un-

pleasant prospect, but to go in the company of Sir Joseph Warren-Smith was quite another thing.

"Of course, I know he means well and is a most worthy person," the friend of the aristocracy was saying in his little gentlemanly soul, "but he is a vulgarian! And this requires a great deal of tact. Still, for such an old friend as Lady Sturminster, and for poor Lord Desmond's sake, perhaps it may be really better to go with one of the family—more aboveboard."

As he cogitated in this strain, the decision was made for him.

"So it is settled," said the great lady. "You will make arrangements, both of you. It had better be early this week. Now, I think we'll have tea." Her countenance assumed the nearest approach to affability of which it was capable. "Sir Joseph, ring the bell."

CHAPTER VII.

The dining room at Branksome Cottage—Orris' Folly, as the neighborhood had dubbed it, the country house rented by Madame La Marmora for the season—was almost an *al fresco* apartment. The celebrated and erratic lady, under whose auspices the once unpretentious little building, so admirably situated, had been practically reconstructed, had happened to be passing through a phase of classic enthusiasm at the time. It had struck her as nothing incongruous—or, perhaps, the very incongruity had pleased—to set on homely English lawns, beside a placid-flowing English river, these fancies of a southern grace, of bygone Attic days. Neither had it troubled her that slender columns of white marble, marble floor and steps, should abut to brick and half timber. She had demanded classic halls and terraces to set off what some enthusiastic critic had called her peculiar classic grace—the Greek drama had been her last success—and she had obtained what she demanded. In no room had her own taste and her architect's fidelity to it been carried out to better purpose than in that reserved for "feasts."

On one side it opened upon a cov-

ered, columned, loggialike terrace which, with six shallow steps of white marble running the whole length of the front, led out to the falling sweep of the turf, with the river sparkling far beneath. Huge tangles of Virginia creeper and honeysuckle had been trained to climb to the roof and fling wreaths and long hanging tendrils between and across the pillars.

Within, the room was almost bare; it was cool and marble walled; it was ceiled with gleaming copper foil; on the marble flags two or three tiger skins were cast about. Classic reclining seats ran the length of the narrow board which served as dining table, on one of which a gorgeous spread of purple silk marked the hostess' place. At one end of the strange chamber a pedestal of exquisite line bore a bronze head of Antinoüs, before which it had been Mrs. Orris' much-applauded custom to place fruits in sacrifice, and a lamp ever burning with aromatic oil.

The present occupant of this fantastic dwelling was as ignorant of, as she was indifferent to, the pieties of the golden age; but she, too, fancied herself vastly amid the marble, and found a childish pleasure in dispensing hospitality in surroundings so unusual as to provoke perpetual comment, wonder, and admiration.

This day of May, however, she sat at luncheon in her colonnaded feast chamber with no other guest than her manager, who had motored down from London unexpectedly; Fifi made a third at the meal. And none of them appeared to be in any specially contented frame of mind, for Robecq had brought news that was unpalatable to each.

Madame La Marmora had been but a week in possession of Branksome, and no cloud had thus far dimmed the long, sunny hours. But now the cloud was on the brow of the dwellers in this paradise.

Fulvia flung herself petulantly against the purple drapery of her Greek seat. Her strong white hand drummed the fine linen on the table before her.

"Never a moment's peace! One might think that I might have as much

holiday as a schoolboy. But no! Herr Pedagogus is back upon me! Robecq, that is a fine trick you played me. It was you dug up the old man!"

"The best turn I ever did you in all my life, Fulvia," said the manager, with a trifle less urbanity than was usual with him. "Where would you be without Fritz? Answer me that."

She capped him after the fashion that betrayed her origin.

"Come, where would you be?"

"Considerably poorer," owned he, with the ghost of his chuckle. "Considerably worse off. I'm the first to admit it."

His eye fell on the ripe, sullen countenance of the girl opposite to him, at the far end of the table. Both her elbows were propped on it, her clasped hands under her chin; the loose sleeves of her silk blouse had fallen back from the young, firm curves of sunburned arms and wrists. Her hair stood out in a glory against a sunlit patch of marble space behind her. Her face beneath was downcast as a child's—beautiful, he thought, with its glow and tan, with the carmine and gold in which this open-air week had steeped it.

"Considerably worse off," drawled Robecq again; wiped his bearded lip with the absurd fringed napkin; and suddenly smiled—his own genial self once more.

"Fritz does keep us a little too much in order," he pursued, "and I own, dear friend, that I should have been quite content if he had withdrawn the light of his countenance for just another fortnight, when the work for *Salome* must begin in earnest. I'm not clear, either, that he ought to travel so soon. He's had a pretty sharp attack, I'm afraid."

"Show me his letter," ordered the singer.

She snapped it from his hand, as with characteristic deliberation he selected it from his pocketbook. He watched her face as she read; he had expected just that dilation of the nostrils, that uplifted lip of anger, that glance of menace flung from one end of the table to the other.

"So!" she cried. "The old nurse is after the baby! Who told him Fifi was here? Who told him, I say?"

Again she rapped the table:

"Ah! Did you, you little fool?"

Fifi shook her aureoled head.

"You, then?"

"No," soothed the baron, "neither the young fool"—his glance rested caressingly upon Fifi—"nor the old fool." He tapped his buff waistcoat jocosely. "My dear friend, it's as simple as A. B. C. You forget the schoolmistress, Madame Aubert."

"Old busybody! It serves me right for letting that brat be planted on me!"

Fifi unclasped her hands to hide a trembling lip. This mother, still beloved in spite of a hundred cruel caprices, had not yet lost the power to wound to the quick. She was still enthroned in a sanctuary, to be believed in, to be worshiped, propitiated; a vengeful deity, if you will, but still a deity!

"Have some strawberries, little girl," purred the baron.

He rose to fetch the basket from the side table—a white marble slab supported by green-bronze fauns—and began to pick the largest into a green majolica platter; his voice trickling on complacently, though a furtive glance or two satisfied him that the girl was choking down her tears.

"I always think these hothouse strawberries have the best flavor. Everything is the better for cultivation; eh, Fulvia? Cream, little one, and sugar? Brown sugar, to my taste."

Meanwhile, La Marmora, all to her grievance, had begun, with jeering comment, to read the letter of her undesired repetitor.

"Honored sir." Oh, yes, much he honors you, Robecq. Why don't you show yourself the master for once? You've let him get beyond you. I thank you for your kindness in saying that you wish me to remain some time longer to recruit, and finish my cure, before joining you. You wrote him that, did you?" An ironical smile twisted her mouth; she turned and strove in vain to catch his eye as he sifted sugar over

the selected strawberries. "Robecq, what did you call yourself just now—an old fool?"

As she swept her eyes away from him back to the letter, they rested a second vindictively on her daughter's bent head; then she proceeded in a higher and still harsher key:

"I have had news which decides me to come to England at once. Sincerely, F. Meyer." Decides him! I like that! News? He's had news!" Again the flaming glance sought her daughter. "And if I choose to say I won't have him about me till he's wanted, what then, Monsieur le Baron?"

"Why then, my dear, you'll be the greatest fool of us three," he responded tranquilly. He slipped the plate before the girl as he spoke: "To please *me*, Miss Fifi," he coaxed. "*Na*—never mind fork or spoon—in your own pretty fingers!"

"Pshaw!" exclaimed the prima donna, and rose abruptly. Even as she rose she stiffened into an attitude of petrified astonishment.

One of the pert parlor maids, whose flying white streamers and befrilled aprons were so ludicrously out of tone with these classic haunts, had just drawn aside the heavy purple hanging that separated the reception room from the dining hall. In the aperture stood a man, looking in upon them.

A man, large of build, though bent a little from the shoulders, with a leonine head of white hair, and massive features hewn as out of rock. About the whole figure was the majesty of age, but none of its decadence. His great bowed figure, the lines of his countenance, above all, the look in the eyes, spoke of one old in suffering and in endurance rather than in actual years.

When he had first beheld him Robecq had recognized in those steadfast eyes the glance, as he phrased it, of the tamer. No doubt it was through this steadfast gaze that Fritz Meyer imposed his authority. Even those to whom he could only be "the old repetitor" had a way of deferring to him when under the spell of his glance. But it would have needed a soul more akin

to his own than any he was like to meet in his present life to understand what lay behind it.

"Fritz!" cried La Marmora, with a quaver in her voice.

"Hello!" ejaculated the baron. He strove to be jovial, but the ejaculation rang somewhat flat.

Fifi's high young tones made no disguise of her dismay.

"Oh, dear! Fritz already!"

"Mr. Meyer," announced the pert parlor maid, after a prolonged interval of observation—the ways of the opera singer's household were a constant source of excitement, not unmixed with contempt, to her and her kin. She dropped the purple curtain and departed with the flounce she considered her duty to bestow upon a mistress so far removed from gentility.

So Fritz was back!

CHAPTER VIII.

Fritz took a few heavy paces forward; and then it was perceived that he walked with difficulty, leaning upon a crutch stick. He paused suddenly, closed his eyes, and reeled very slightly. Immediately the impresario, with an exclamation of anxiety, was by his side.

"Good heavens! Meyer, my dear friend, you're ill! Tut, tut! You'd no business to travel in this state. Sit down! Good God, man!"—his eye fell on a swollen bandaged foot incased in a huge black cloth slipper—"you'll have phlebitis, as sure as fate! Miss Fifi"—hardly ever had they heard the deliberate baron speak so sharply—"if there's a footstool in this—in this damn fool of a place"—he cast a furious glance at the marble nakedness of the room—"bring it along, quick!"

"A glass of wine?" suggested the singer, faltering and oddly subdued.

"No," almost snarled her manager, "wine with inflammatory gout! Murder! Some brandy and water, weak."

Under his guidance the repetitor sank into a classic chair; and, with a rush of young feet, Fifi plunged into the inner room, to return with an armful of

cushions. The gray head was bent forward on the great chest.

"Is he faint?" whispered the girl, terrified; a nip of remorse was at her heart. Fritz had always meant so well by her. Had she hurt him? Had he marked her ungracious greeting? She dropped on her knees.

"Child, don't touch the foot!" almost screamed Robecq.

"Oh, Fritz!" she cried, and caught the pendent, livid hand.

The old man raised his head, opened his eyes, and looked at her. No, he was not faint, for there was illimitable strength of sorrow in those eyes.

"Fritz, Fritz!" she exclaimed again, and scarcely knew why she should feel herself so stricken with remorse, so heartless, so ungrateful. Crouching closer against his chair, she burst into tears. He disengaged his hand to lay it on her head.

"Will you drink this?" said Fulvia, with that unwonted, strange uncertainty of manner.

"Thank you, madam, I will not drink." They were the first words he had spoken since his entrance.

"My dear friend—" Robecq was beginning to protest. He stretched out his hand impatiently for the glass. But La Marmora flung a dark and furtive look at him.

"It's no use," she whispered angrily, and set the glass behind her on the marble slab.

Meyer grasped the edge of the table with one hand and his stick with the other, preparatory to the effort of wrenching himself up from his seat. Robecq, his unusual agitation subsiding, measured him thoughtfully.

"But," he admonished, "you're not in a state to move. You ought to be in bed! Fulvia, get one of those impossible maids of yours to prepare a room directly."

"No," said Meyer.

His voice rang out with such unexpected decision that all three started, and Fifi sat back on her heels, pushing the hair back from her wet face to stare at him. Slowly La Marmora crimsoned. She walked away from them

toward one of the archways and leaned against a pillar, looking out upon the green.

The repetitor made another attempt, this time successful, to rise to his feet.

"I beg your pardon," he said quietly then, "for making a disturbance. I felt I must come straight to you, just to see"—he paused for a scarcely appreciable moment and let his gaze fall on the girl crouching before him—"to see that all was well with you here. A cab is waiting with my luggage. I go to the inn."

Though he knew it was futile, the baron again attempted expostulation. An inn! An English inn! And his friend in such case! And his health so important to them all! And *Salome*—*Salome* upon them before they knew where they were!

"And if you're ill, for I fear you'll pay for this—was ever creature so obstinate? If you're ill, where are we? For our sakes, most excellent Meyer, stay here and be nursed."

"It is impossible," answered the other shortly. "Madam"—as if impelled against her will, the singer turned upon the word—"I shall have the honor of presenting myself for repetition as soon as the Herr Baron thinks it necessary."

"Only don't get ill," she answered fretfully.

He made her a little bow, without speaking. It was so courteous that it was almost a rebuke. Then, once more, he looked at Fifi.

"Na—and will you come and see the old man at the inn?"

She sprang and clung to the hand that held the stick. He looked so ill, her poor old Fritz, with his gray, lined face. There were beads of perspiration on his forehead. His foot must be hurting him dreadfully, and she had been so unkind!

Panther's Cub had a heart, and it smote her.

"I'll come this evening! Every evening—just as always!" she cried. "Oh, Fritz, don't be ill!"

Nearly the same words as her mother's; but with what different solicitude.

The old man smiled; then he turned and began to move painfully and slowly toward the entrance.

"I'll go with you," said Robecq. "Here, let me take you, on this side, under the armpit, my dear, dear Fritz! It's straight to bed with you; and I'm dashed"—the baron rarely swore, but when he did he was extraordinarily emphatic—"if I don't motor up to London and bring down a specialist and a nurse for you this very evening!"

He was as good as his word. A nurse was secured. A specialist was duly kidnapped and brought down; something puzzled, and a little offended at finding that the object was nothing but a shabby old German musician, laid up in a stuffy roadside inn room. Robecq's solemn asseveration that the man was more precious to him than gold, that it was a matter almost of life and death to his enterprise; that it was as important to set this Meyer on foot as to preserve his famous singer in voice, failed to convince the great Harley Street oracle.

If it had been Madame La Marmora herself whom he had been requested to attend, the expedition would have been more interesting, certainly. But he was willing to make allowances for the proverbial excitability of foreigners; and on examination, found the patient ill enough to awaken some professional zeal.

Mr. Meyer accepted the unsolicited attentions with perfect simplicity, and promised obedience to instructions. Sir James looked very grave and shook his head over the baron's reiterated asseveration that their good Meyer must somehow or other be up and about in a fortnight at latest. There was fever, there was, as the impresario had himself surmised, venal inflammation. These cases were slow, and depended on individual temperament.

Robecq sent the great man home in his own motor, and returned disconsolately to Fritz's bedside.

"Now, here's a pretty thing, Fritz!" he cried, with almost a sound of tears in his drawl.

The old man turned his drawn face on the pillow to look at his manager.

"Do not fret, Herr Baron," he said, with soothing conviction; "I shall not fail to the work."

"Well," said the baron, brightening. "I've never known you fail yet."

In the evening, as she had promised, came Fifi. She ran down through the grounds—it was only some five minutes' walk—still in the rough white serge in which Meyer had seen her that afternoon. Her hair was loosened by the wind and the long day's exercise. She sprang in, with her usual impetuous leap, and roused him from a heavy doze in which he had fallen under the soothing effect of the drugs, which it had been Robecq's business to see promptly delivered.

"Is that my little child?" he asked, rather hoarsely.

She came on tiptoe and stood beside the bed. In the dim light of the solitary candle her eyes widened upon him with the awed pity of a child.

"The baron says I'm not to touch you," she whispered. "He says it half kills people to touch them when they have got."

"Kneel down," said the man, "and let me see your face."

She knelt. He moved the candle forward, and his eyes, dilated with fever and circled with pain, fixed themselves long and searchingly upon the flushed, lovely face. Then he glanced down at the earth-stained hands that lay clasped upon his sheet, and encircled them with his own.

"Ach! Always the tomboy!"

He was wont to scold her for this; but to-night he spoke the words like an indulgent caress, almost as a joyful discovery. Then he laid his fevered fingers against her cheek.

"I was so afraid when I heard that the little girl had escaped from school!"

"But it was to go to mamma—and I am not a little girl any more. Afraid, when I was with my mamma?"

The sick man sighed.

"No, you are no longer a little girl. Have you been good, Fifi?"

She answered him yes, though there was an unwonted sense of unreasonable guilt, a weight at her heart as she did so. Why did she not want to tell him about Lord Desmond, and all the wonderful new thoughts that circled round him in her mind? Why was she almost glad—nay, quite glad—that Fritz should be kept to his bed, and unable to find out anything yet, for many a long, free day to come? The consciousness of her own hidden baseness lent an extra tenderness to her next words.

"Darling old Fritz, I am so sorry you're in pain! Why did you travel?"

"To make sure that you were safe."

It was Fritz's way to fuss over her, she knew; but he had never spoken so openly of his self-appointed guardianship. She resented it as much as her real tenderness of heart would allow her to resent anything to-night from the sick old man who loved her.

"But, Fritz——"

"Have you said your prayers every night?"

Her laugh rang out.

"Of course, of course, old stupid!"

It was a relief to be able to reassure him in so complete truthfulness. For rarely indeed had Fifi prayed so earnestly as after those troubling, delightful evenings, with the memory of the blue eyes in her soul.

"You used to pray at my knee," Meyer went on dreamily.

She thought he was wandering a little; she had never known him like this before; his face was gray on the pillow, his touch was burning.

"I will say them beside you now," she cried, on an inspiration. "And after that you must sleep. Your grand nurse with the cap told me I must not stay long."

She said them then, her child's prayers that he himself had taught her. And when she had done, unconsciously as in the old days, she offered him her forehead for his kiss. He had not kissed her since her confirmation in the German school. Now he did so, solemnly, like one who blesses. After that, with a deep sigh:

"I will sleep," he said, and turned his face toward the wall.

As she looked back from the threshold upon the gray head, she thought, so still did he lay, he was already asleep. Then she flew like an arrow from the bow through the dews and the shadows and the scents of the gardens. She was in haste to make herself beautiful—for she never knew what guests her mother might have; and as the baron was sure, as usual, to ask for her in the evening, perhaps "he" might be among them.

Even if they had not a word apart together, their eyes would meet. She had learned—in how short a time—to seek, and find, the deep kindling of those slow blue eyes.

TO BE CONTINUED.



SONG

THY voice, thy look, thy smile,
They shake my heart;
It's oh, to dwell forevermore,
Love, where thou art!

Thy voice, thy look, thy smile—
Life's golden part!
Who would not dwell forevermore
With shaken heart?

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



THE Revoke

By
HB MARRIOTT-WATSON



CONFESS that I still look back upon the Whitwell affair with a sense of chagrin, if not of humiliation, tempered with a feeling of amusement, which, thank Heaven, I can still get out of life. When I cease to see the humor of a situation or lose my appreciation of the ironic, it will be time for me to close the shutters. I shall have no business in life. There was a ludicrous aspect to the Whitwell affair.

Mrs. Whitwell had no hand in conveying that herself. She was indeed a woman who seemed to check laughter at its source, a passionate, weak, willful creature of remarkable if rather exotic looks, and no sense of rest. How she came to be mated to Whitwell I never could guess. But the longer one lives the more insoluble such problems are.

When I made their acquaintance they had been married ten years, were childless, and lived in a fringe of smart society with nothing particular to do and plenty of money to do it on. Mrs. Whitwell received admiration, and inhaled it as incense; she made an appeal to artistic and semi-bohemian tastes rather than to those of the average sensual man; which was one of the reasons why I was surprised to find her so much with Carew.

Carew was obviously a fine, healthy animal, with good lungs, clear blue eyes, and little or no conscience. I don't think he knew one division of art from another, and if he was to be accounted bohemian, it could only be on the score of his late hours and some of his hab-

its. But the fact is that they did take to each other astonishingly.

I had evidence of this thrust upon me in what one must always regard as an unpleasant manner. To be an unwilling eavesdropper is one of the rôles in life which I least envy; and the discomfort is intensified when it is plain to all parties that you are what you are. Carew knew I heard and saw; Mrs. Whitwell knew; and I knew they knew. There was the awkwardness. We all had to pretend that no one knew anything, and look at each other as innocently as kittens.

Both of them managed this. I think, as a matter of fact, that it was I only who showed myself embarrassed. Mrs. Whitwell was too intense in her flame; Carew was too indifferent to opinion. At least he had the merit of courage, the saving quality of his defects. I never cared for him, and I was sorry for the imbroglio thus discovered to me in Farmer's studio.

They had relied upon the huge protection of the easels and the canvases; it was only a stupid blunder on my part that made their blunder stupider. I was interested not in Farmer's rich oils which he was exhibiting to admiring guests in that elegant and fashionable way of his which marks him down for a future Academician; but I did want to examine a pretty water color that caught my eye on the wall.

So I separated from the personally conducted gang, as Mrs. Whitwell and Carew had done before me. There was a Venetian painting on the easel which hid all but their toes, and I had to pass

it to reach my water color. Eyes and ears were the avenues of that rapid impression which was a mere affair of seconds. Carew recovered instantaneously.

"Seen this?" he asked, boldly challenging. "It's thundering good."

I paused and admired, with the two looking on, and probably at me, and, as I have said, I alone seemed to display any awkwardness. Carew had passed it off like a gentleman, anyway.

The discovery rendered me slightly uncomfortable, and, moreover, I felt somewhat responsible. I could not now but be conscious of a drama developing darkly under my nose, so to speak. I liked Whitwell. He was very ordinary, but very decent. He had plenty of money, but did not use it like a "bounder," as many rich folk do. He had the correct tastes, and was a little too much under the influence of his surroundings. To sum him up, he lacked character, but was very friendly, and without a vice that mattered socially.

I pondered the point at odd moments, as to whether Whitwell ought to be acquainted with the situation. I had an idea that he ought, that it was some one's duty to lay the facts before him. Whether other people had discovered I didn't know, but it was pretty clear to me that I had, and it looked as if the burden was, to speak colloquially, "up to me." I shrank from it.

And yet I had an excellent opportunity, one fallen by mere chance into my hands. Whitwell invited me to dine over the telephone.

"I wish you'd come over," he said, "if you've nothing better to do. I'm a bachelor to-night."

As luck had it, I was at a loose end myself, and I joined him in his comfortable bijou house, as the agents would call it. Whitwell had an excellent ménage, and his dinners never spoiled their perfection by undue length. We had quite a pleasant chat on politics, golf, and metal work. Oddly enough, Whitwell had a genuine taste and skill in metal work, which was his particular hobby.

A little later I got the opening from

him, of which I did not take advantage. He had told me his wife was at the opera at the outset, and he did not mention her again until we had the port on the table.

"My wife's with the Clares," he said casually, then. "Know them? They've got a box."

"I've met them," I said, with my mind on the fact that the Clares were cousins of Carew.

"Not bad," said Whitwell, eyeing his cigar, "but a bit too raffish for me."

"The sort of people who make a trail for themselves anywhere," I said. "Well, that's individuality, and has its qualities."

It was precisely the individuality, I knew, at which Whitwell winced; his unventuresome spirit took fright at perfect freedom.

"They've got a nice place in Berkshire, Carew tells me," said Whitwell next.

There was my opening, you will see; and I did take actually one single step toward it.

"Is Carew with them?" I asked.

"Yes," said Whitwell cheerfully.

I paused at that. I shied away. I felt the momentary silence between us rather awkward. But in reality there was no reason for my sense of awkwardness. Whitwell poured himself out half a glass of port and sipped it.

"How tobacco ruins it!" he exclaimed. "Shall we have a game of billiards?"

The opportunity had gone, but I got it again just before I left. Over a little whisky and soda in his smoking room we were discussing the merits of a current play which had provoked some consideration of a moral problem.

"I don't know," said Whitwell, breaking a pause. "I fancy he wasn't right. After all, he couldn't know what she was doing, however much he might—well, wonder."

Of a sudden I was struck with horror. The thing hadn't any real relation to his case, but what he said seemed to invest it with particularity, and with a particularity that was personal to him.

"Of course not," I said uncomfortably.

"Things are not always what they seem," said poor Whitwell, with a smile, and I knew that he had himself connected up the thought, by his next words, which followed after another silence. He looked at his watch.

"Peggy will be here soon. I expect Carew will be bringing her. You'll wait, won't you?"

As I have told you, I was scared off the chance. I rose and mumbled my regrets. Carew was to bring her home. He accepted the situation thus. Was it blind faith, I asked myself, or was it a shameless lack of spirit? Perhaps it was neither, altogether, but a little of both.

Anyhow, since I had "funked" it, Whitwell's problem, as it concerned him, might be dismissed. It was of no use to vex my cowardly soul about it. No doubt a thousand cases of some relationship to this were engaged in solving themselves even at that very moment. I must consider myself in the light of a spectator, of one who sits in the stalls in a very good seat, as it chanced, with a full view of everything and no need to employ opera glasses.

I thought most of this rather bitterly, and for my own enfranchisement, as I went home, without having seen Mrs. Whitwell or Carew. But I did not succeed altogether in banishing the ridiculous sense of responsibility I experienced. I felt it was impossible now to return to Whitwell; but fortune, a capricious jade with a tragic sense of humor, sometimes, offered me a further chance—with the woman.

I went to a very frivolous play a few weeks later, one in which people appear unexpectedly from doors and collide with other people who are on a similar errand. I was tired of problems and Shakespeare—whom I prefer to read—and of musical comedy, which is only fit for boys and girls and old roués. But the incessant misunderstandings and entanglement of a farce make one feel quite young again. I believe I wiped my streaming eyes when the sentimental hero fell into the bath.

However, this is of minor and only personal importance. What matters to this narrative is that I saw away by the left Mrs. Whitwell and Carew, the former laughing with as hearty a gusto as myself. Probably I should not have given the fact more than a moment's thought in those distracting circumstances. Indeed, I only shook the idea from myself as something which wanted to interfere with my enjoyment. But what brought it back to me was my little supper at the Savoy.

I had been seated ten minutes when Carew bustled past me without seeing me, and a lady rustled after him to a table not very far away. Of course, they were bound to recognize me some time or other, and Mrs. Whitwell smiled pleasantly as she bowed from the middle distance. There was, or might have been, nothing in it from my point of view, if I had not had that awkward sense of responsibility. I also had in my pocket a letter from Whitwell, received that morning, giving me an address which I had asked for in connection with a cameo. The letter had been dispatched from Scotland.

Of course Whitwell might have got back by this time, or might indeed have traveled by the day express and be awaiting his wife at the moment. But—well, anyway, I don't think I responded overcordially to Carew's greeting, as he passed at midnight. They melted away into the London night in a cab. What affair was it of mine?

I called at the "bijou residence" in Mayfair the following afternoon, and was admitted to Mrs. Whitwell's presence. She was blithe, friendly, and absolutely at her ease. I had an excuse in the letter Whitwell had written—I forget what it was. I made my first point within the first few minutes. Whitwell was still in Scotland. She said so frankly, disarmingly frankly. I was rather staggered. You see, I had come out for a reconnaissance in force, so to speak. We touched on several subjects, and it was she herself who introduced the play and the supper.

"How funny you should have been

both at the theatre and the restaurant with us!" I somehow detected, or, at any rate, suspected, a delicious relish of the "us."

"Yes," said I, emboldened and rather reckless in my plunge, "I saw you enjoying it. Carew didn't seem to be amused. I suppose musical comedy is more in his line."

"How should it be? What do you mean?" She ceased smiling, and was abrupt.

"Oh, he's the kind of man who enjoys that kind of thing," I said vaguely, retreating a little.

"I certainly shouldn't say that," she said at once. "I dare say he would like the music."

"Oh, the nymphs, the Bath buns, the seraglio beauties, the sweet drones!" I ejaculated, laughing. "All young men like——"

She rang the bell sharply. "You'll have some tea," she said almost hostilely.

As I wanted to remain, I assented. The truce lasted a few minutes, during which the tea was brought in; then I advanced to the assault.

"Carew always reminds me of the typical Gayety young man," I said reflectively.

She jerked the sugar into my cup. "Indeed!" she remarked icily.

"He has a sharp eye for beauty," I continued.

For some reason or other this seemed to mollify her.

"I shouldn't say that many of the chorus girls were really good-looking off the stage," she replied.

"Certainly not," I hastened to admit. "But, you see, people like Carew don't know that, and I don't think they care about that."

"Your position is interesting, if rather unintelligible." She was glacial again.

"What I mean is that the glamour matters, the make-up, the advertisement in the public eye."

She pondered. "It is attributing a rather vulgar feeling to Mr. Carew, isn't it?" she asked.

I made a point of demurring. "No,"

I said, "I don't think so. All young men are influenced to some extent by the hoardings. It takes middle age to know its own mind and tastes."

"Meaning yourself, Mr. Tyrwhitt?" she said rather rudely.

I had no doubt I was trying her; what I was in doubt about was whether I was pursuing the right policy in doing so.

"Yes," I replied to her. "I believe I'm old enough to know what I want now. I'm also old enough to know that you can't have everything you want; that there are, so to speak, boundaries."

She was looking at me defiantly. I have said she was of a neurotic temperament, and I judge that she was emotionally inclined by circumstances just then. We had been fencing, and she took off the buttons.

"I believe," she said coldly, but she was breathing hard, "that you are being impertinent enough to lecture me."

I had hardly expected this. "I have said nothing," I began, and then realized my cowardice and my chance. "I ought to say something," I said, "in the circumstances. I see you perhaps know——"

"I know this," said she, "that no one, certainly no stranger, interferes with my actions or my life."

There was something in the last two words that alarmed me. They had a critical and even ominous sound. Yet I hastened to say that I claimed no right or wish to interfere with any one's life.

She replied excitedly: "Oh, I understand. You have never liked me. Ever since—you think because——"

We both knew what she was thinking of; it was the occasion in Farmer's studio.

"You must believe one thing," said I firmly, "that I have never done anything but wish you well."

"You have never liked me," she repeated defiantly.

There was just enough of truth in that contention to embarrass me, but I manfully met the thrust.

"I have always considered you a

very attractive personality," I said, "even perhaps dangerously attractive."

She was not to be mollified; she flamed. "Why do you suppose that because people are interested in each other, frankly interested, they are dangerous? Do you judge all people by your own standards?" she demanded scornfully. "I know you have watched me ever since—for ever so long. I will not have it, do you hear? I will not suffer this indignity, to be spied upon—to—to——"

She trailed off into an incoherent splutter of indignation, leaving me abashed. She had fired the mine herself, and, though I did not enjoy the explosion, I clung desperately to the chances it opened.

"I have never yet played eavesdropper with intent," I said, aware of my flushed face. "I can assure you, my dear lady, that never in this world have I kept any watch upon you. It was by accident I was at the Savoy last night; it was——"

"By accident you are here now with a trumpery excuse," she interjected, in scorn.

She had got inside my guard then with a vengeance. I had come of set purpose and with a trumpery excuse. Any one overlooking this scene would have decided that I was the culprit in it, and I don't know that he would have been far wrong. I anathematized my silly blunder in taking a hand in an affair which didn't concern me. But I had to get out, to get away with as many rags of my self-respect and honor as I could save, and so I said, with an air of determination:

"I am here, not because I am a *Paul Pry* or an intermeddler with other people's affairs, but because of my sincere regard for you. We have been talking till now with the veil on, and I don't think it is necessary to discard it. I'm pretty much of a worldling, I dare say, but I don't know how far I should like to stand in the way of a grand passion, of elemental feelings. Their force and influence are, I think, a little outside my comprehension; outside, at any rate, my sphere. I say I don't know whether

I should hold myself justified in blocking the road. But, my dear lady, I know, I will swear, that it is incumbent on us all not to mistake catspaws for gales, or puddles for mountain lakes. Do you remember that advice that we should be guided by the light that is in us, but make sure that the light was not darkness?"

I felt rather like a revivalist preacher as I said it, but somehow it came out. I hope I did not look shamefaced, as I felt. I did not even want to meet her eyes, which were wide and stormy.

"Thank you," she said tensely, and rose.

She did not offer her hand, and seemed to quiver. I had an idea that she was on the verge of a "scene." I hastened from the room, having thus irretrievably ruined my cause. I took some champagne at dinner to drown the remembrance of the ignominious retreat, and next day, of course, I had a headache.

Whitwell wrote to me from Scotland a few days later. He mentioned "Peggy" in connection with a sunset. There had been strange hues mingling in it which had given him an idea for a setting of jewels. It was odd how his small corner of art appealed to this rather ordinary and distinctly dull gentleman at leisure. He would like to design a ring for Peggy after his famous sunset. He wrote of it quite casually, quite naturally. Somehow it sounded like the days of Benvenuto Cellini and other great artificers and craftsmen. He inclosed a drawing for my approval or criticism, for somehow or another he had an absurd notion of my authority as a virtuoso; and he begged me to submit it with my criticism, favorable or otherwise, to Peggy.

The request left me, as you may conceive, aghast. That I who had been practically turned out of her house by outraged innocence should dare to return! On the other hand, I couldn't write to Whitwell and let him know that I was no longer on Mrs. Whitwell's visiting list. I began to see strange awkwardnesses open up. The

long and short of it was that I had insulted my friend's wife!

I forwarded Whitwell's letter to Mrs. Whitwell, and the design, together with a covering note informing her that I had no criticism to pass upon a masterpiece—and I left it at that. I received no answer, and I breathed more freely, and thought I had washed my hands of the affair.

Yet I will confess that I had what I believe is called a subconsciousness of responsibility still, and when it got the chance it captured me. The chance was Mrs. Whitwell in a cab, Mrs. Whitwell with a tragic face flashing for a moment into the low, mellow lights of a spring night in Piccadilly, and as swiftly vanishing. The cab turned into St. James' Street sharply, and I realized that I had stopped to watch it. I thought I saw it go up Jermyn Street. Carew's quarters were in Jermyn Street.

I retraced my steps, crossed the road, and made my way to Jermyn Street. I had failed with my two previous chances. Should I fail also with the last? That last was Carew himself.

There was no cab before the door of his chambers, but it might easily have been dismissed. As I knocked I heard a church clock striking nine. I came into an antechamber, where I was asked to halt. Voices issued from a room beyond great folding doors. Carew's rooms were luxurious; he had what is called a half house; that is, all above the shopping floor on the street. Presently he emerged from the larger room, a cigarette between his fingers.

"Hello!" said he, not genially, but rather, I took it, as an invitation for me to get on and state my business.

He was dressed in a lounge suit, and looked very large and handsome in the animal way. As the door had opened to admit him, the stream of voices flowing in had rid me of one obsession; Mrs. Whitwell was not there. But I was, and it seemed as if fate had decided that I should go on.

"I see you have a party, Carew," said I; "I really came to see you about a private matter."

He hesitated a moment before he answered: "Oh, well, fire away. It's all right here. Smoke?"

He sat down with a gesture of brusque hospitality.

I followed suit, but I didn't smoke.

"I thought that a lady had entered these rooms," I said, beginning with a bold frontal attack.

"What business of yours was it if she had?" he asked, meeting me, as all frontal attacks are met, with brutal effectiveness.

"I was, however, mistaken," I pursued, ignoring this, "so I thought I should like a small talk with you."

"Very good of you," said Carew, with a laugh. "May I ask what all this is about?"

"If names are necessary, you can have them," I retorted. "But I think you will understand without resorting to them. What I want to do is to make an appeal to you. I want you, in fact, to sheer off. I am blunt because I am in earnest."

He made no further pretense of not comprehending, but pulled his mustache a little.

"What the devil has it got to do with you?" he asked.

"I don't know," said I frankly. "Nothing, in one sense; yes, this, I think—that I hate pain and suffering constitutionally, and I don't like to see people on their way to it."

I was glad I had not talked of duty and moral obligation. It would never have done with one of Carew's fiber. His tone was not so harsh in his reply.

"You're mighty solicitous for others at your time of life."

I didn't mind the sneer at my years, for, after all, he could not give me ten years, and I pressed what I thought was my advantage.

"If you could put your hand on your heart, as the phrase goes, Carew, and assure me that this thing mattered, mattered a whole heap in your life, I believe I would put on my hat and go downstairs quite quietly. It would not be moral of me, and I should not approve. But I should realize that it was hopeless, and shrug my shoulders. It

is precisely because I don't believe it matters to you, anything that amounts to a lot, that I am here, risking a snub for my impertinent interference."

"Yes, it is damnably impertinent," he said; "I ought to kick you out. Hang it, man, I don't come slouching round after you and your affairs. I suppose it would be said you meant well. People who mean well are the devil of a nuisance. Why didn't you go in for the Church?"

He spoke angrily, but somehow I felt easier than I had hitherto felt. There was something in his eyes— He laughed angrily.

"You come here and ask me to give up a—well, hang it, to turn my back on a woman to please you! Lord, it's funny, Tyrwhitt; it's really funny."

"I suppose everything has a ridiculous aspect," I replied. "I'm not saying my interference hasn't. But there's tragedy in it also, believe me. There's tragedy for three people, anyway. If it mattered—if it was worth it—"

"Confound you, man, how do you know it isn't worth it, and that it doesn't matter?" he cried sharply.

In that moment, looking at him, if I had ever doubted before, I doubted no longer. I knew that it did not matter, however near it came to mattering.

"Tell me it does," I said quietly.

He was silent, and the hand on which he leaned his bronzed face moved restlessly in the cheek.

"Look here, Tyrwhitt," he said abruptly, "I think you'd better clear out before we get any further. I've a card party on, and I want to get back to my guests. Let me remind you that you're not one."

This was more like the Carew I had always conceived and conjectured, but there was that pause to explain. I believe he was troubled, but I did not dare believe that my words had stirred in him a scruple. I rose. I think it was the trouble in his mind, revealed, so to speak, by this bubble in his eyes, and not any scruple that instigated his next words. I had given up hope, and was preparing for eviction like any unwelcome beggar.

"I dare say I oughtn't to have said that. Show there's no ill feeling, and have a drink."

He spoke with a certain obvious, bluff jocosity.

"Thank you, Carew," said I. "I should prefer to go out more as if I had been a guest. It would feel more comfortable."

He laughed, left the room, and me to my reflections, returning presently with a bottle of champagne half filled. He poured out two glasses.

"Anyway, drink and wish me luck," he said, with a snort of laughter.

"I wish you all the luck you deserve," I said, lifting the glass to him.

"Oh, I dare say I shall have better luck than that. Don't you disturb yourself." He laughed again. "What a cautious bird you are!"

He drained his glass, fingered it, filled it again, and once more tossed it off.

"Tell you what," said he suddenly. "I'm in a mood to sport with fate. In fact, I'm doing it in there." He nodded to the other room. "Boleyn and Paraway play high stakes, you know. Well, I'll go nap—kill two birds with one stone, don't you know? After all, my boy, we are the sport of fortune. We are short of a man. It's fate. I'll play you for the negative."

"I don't understand," I said, bewildered.

"Man, you play bridge," said he. "Cut in with us, and that'll be our stakes between you and me. I'll play you for yes or no. Damn the score. Yes or no. Do you take me?"

I was dumfounded. I stared; and then I got room in my mind for reflection. He had given me a chance. I could have sworn he was troubled.

"Done!" said I. "I like a sporting wager."

He opened the folding doors. Two card tables were in play, and two men stood idly against the mantelpiece smoking and in murmurous conversation.

"We won't wait for Bevis any longer," said Carew. "I've got a fourth. Do you know Tyrwhitt?"

I had a slight acquaintance with one of the men, Tothill, but Marshall, the second, was strange to me. They both had an identical air of good breeding and friendly indifference about them. We cut, and fate, the fate to which he had appealed and surrendered, gave me Carew as a partner. He grinned.

"A preliminary canter," he said, as he dealt.

I watched his play carefully, and found it good. We won the first two games, but the pace was slow, and our opponents drew up. Carew rang the bell, and ordered a fresh supply of drinks for his guests. He himself had recourse to the whisky frequently. He was a little noisy for the etiquette of the cardroom. We won the rubber, and he laughed.

"We do pretty well together, Tyrwhitt," he said. "It's a pity—" The cut shifted us, and I found Marshall, my partner, a somewhat imperturbable young man. "Well, now we're at it," said Carew, tossing off the remains of a draft.

He turned to the table with the air of one who had taken off his coat. Tothill dealt.

I don't think I shall ever forget that rubber. My partner and I opened badly, but we struggled gamely uphill. An amused smile played on Carew's face. It angered me. It was, I said to myself, bad form; it was unsportsmanlike. Besides, the game was not over yet, the battle was undecided. We struggled up to twenty-two, being a couple of points under them. The cards were mine, and I made it diamonds. Carew poured out more whisky, and I saw his partner look at him. Tothill was nervous and fidgety.

I should like to set that game down for the edification of bridge players, but I refrain.

We reached a critical point, and Carew played. I was looking at dummy's hand at the moment, and I heard a click from Tothill. I glanced at him, and saw some emotion in his face as he fingered his cards feverishly. Then my eyes fell on the table, and I knew. Carew had revoked.

The absence of that diamond had troubled me. Here it was. I put my hand on it. Carew uttered an exclamation and an oath.

"Sorry, partner! What an infernal ass I am! It must have got stuck—"

He spoke rather thickly, I thought. I think the three of us had the same impression. Tothill frankly and contemptuously looked at the decanter.

"If you've finished with the whisky, I think I'll have some now," he said significantly.

Carew was examining his hand and frowning; Tothill threw his down.

"That gives us the two points, I think," I said quietly.

He shrugged his shoulders, and rose. Carew rose also.

"Awfully sorry," he repeated. His face, always of a high color, was flushed scarlet.

Tothill, without reply, sauntered away to the other tables; Marshall followed. Carew emitted a rather unpleasant snorting laugh and turned to me.

"You want to be paid?" he said.

"Yes," I said.

He stepped to a writing table in the window, and, snapping on the electric lamp, wrote on a sheet of paper, put it in an envelope, and handed it to me. Then he looked at his watch and laughed, still unpleasantly.

"Ten-forty! You'd better take my car."

I didn't understand. He looked round; we were in a corner remote from the others.

"You will find her at the Bull at Dartford. I was to pick her up there. We were going to Dover and France. Give her this, and—rescue her," he said harshly, and with a sneer.

He turned on his heel to the players, and I, having got what I wanted, went out silently, and with a tumult of new feelings. The car was before the door, and I stepped into it, giving the necessary explanations to the chauffeur. I was aware that the window was opened, and that some one was leaning out. But I did not look up.

The car started, and, gathering pace,

slipped into a comfortable speed, and I settled to my reflections. So the affair had reached the stage of elopement! I now understood Mrs. Whitwell's frightened face in the cab. She had been driving to the station. I seemed to be beginning to understand other things also. Fate had made use of several instruments that evening.

I wondered what he had said, how he had explained himself, on what pretext he had withdrawn. Had it been on the plea of safeguarding her, of considerations for Whitwell, of—

In the speculations which followed, time went swiftly past, and I was at Dartford. The Bull is an old hostelry, famed and galleried, with an air which suggests that it has housed many eloping lovers.

I got out of the car and entered, and looked at the letter in my hand. It was addressed to Mrs. Mortimer. Until that moment I had not realized that it would not be Mrs. Whitwell for whom I should ask. I could have sent the note in by a chambermaid, and have fled, but I did not. I was committed now to the whole drama, and I braced myself up to face it. I resolved to see her and give her the letter. I did not suppose that she would take advantage of the car after that, but at least it was my duty to offer it. I could leave it to her, and get back somehow myself.

I inquired of a waiter who ambled up to me.

"Is Mrs. Mortimer here?" I asked.

"Yes, sir. A lady's come, sir," he returned, examining me civilly, but with interest.

I hesitated a moment.

"Will you tell her," said I, "that a gentleman wishes to see her?"

The hour was late; the waiter was indubitably interested in me. The engine of the car was whining in the street. It got on my nerves.

"For goodness' sake, stop it," I cried, going to the door.

In the calm that ensued I had time to get uncomfortable. The waiter had shown me into a small and empty reception room. The door creaked sud-

denly, and opened. I turned my head, pulling myself together to "face the music." A woman entered, tall, buoyant, and gracefully erect.

"It's right that you should know that your journey is fruitless," she said coldly.

For the life of me I could not understand. I was staggered; I thought I had fallen into a Palais Royal farce or a madhouse.

"Fruitless!" I stammered.

She was a woman of thirty, handsome and stately, and with a remarkable gift of facial expression. That expression was now one of mingled contempt, dislike, and triumph.

"You will not find your victim here," she said, with judicial severity.

Something of an explanation dawned on me. "Mrs. Whit—Mrs. Mortimer is not here?" I asked.

"No; at my persuasion she did not come."

I gave vent to a sigh of relief. "I am heartily glad," I said.

Her expression changed to one of marked hatred and anger. Her coldness vanished.

"You dare to say that!" she cried. "You dare to play the hypocrite like that! Ah, believe me, I know the story. It's only too old a story, and will be, alas, until our sex— You trick an unfortunate, helpless woman into believing she cares for you, and get her to throw over all her obligations and duties for your sake. And then you dare to say that you are glad she sees wisdom at the eleventh hour. Oh, it's abominable! You are detestable!"

"But, pardon me," I began. "I—"

"I know your sort," she declared, interrupting me, and looking very handsome in her indignation. "You lie in wait for your prey. You are without moral sense. The look of you is enough. Any one could tell from your appearance what you were. You are satyrs in your pursuit of—of—"

"But," I managed to get in through this moment of uncertainty, "I am not Carew."

For a second she was taken aback; then she recovered.

"It doesn't matter," she said. "You are his creature; you are in his confidence. I think, if anything, that makes you worse."

I held out the note, writhing under this biting denunciation.

"Will you please read that?" I said.

She looked at the superscription.

"It is not for me," she said scornfully.

Honestly I had in my alarm clean forgotten the fact.

"Anyway, it is for Mrs.—Mrs. Mortimer," I explained meekly, "and I have every reason to believe that it announces his withdrawal from a position which would have been disastrous for all concerned."

There was silence while she examined me, and I tried to recall what she had said about my personal appearance.

"Is this true?" she asked at last.

I assured her it was. "I have just come from Carew, with whom I hope my remonstrances had some effect."

Her stage attitude had collapsed altogether. "I had it out with Peggy," she blurted forth. "I saw something was wrong; I dissuaded her at the last moment—caught her at the station—and came on to meet you—I mean, him."

I wondered how Carew would have met her.

The silence between us being a little awkward, "I have a car outside," I said. "Can I be of service in taking you back to town?"

She thanked me, rather diffidently now. She was no longer her outraged sex rampant, but a mere woman feeling the embarrassments of a difficult situation. If she had not assented she would have had to remain there all night.

We drove through a dark night, and

I forbore to snap on the electric light in the limousine. We could not see each other's faces, and we talked perfunctorily. I think she was exhausted with the emotions of her part; and I was heartily tired of mine.

We threw them up together, almost as if by mutual agreement, when we reached London. The flashing lights of the streets revealed to me then a tremulous lip and a collapsed courage. She was really very beautiful, and had been badly shaken. I got her upon the subject of roses which she adored, and her garden which she cultivated in a beautiful country valley. It was thence I gathered that she had dropped upon London and her friend's crisis unexpectedly. She was charming about gardens, and had a delicate taste in poetry. She was smiling ere we reached Charing Cross.

"There is one thing I want to ask you before you leave me," I said finally, as I shook hands with her on the pavement before the Whitwells' bijou house. I was thinking ruefully of her description of my face. "After this, I shall never be invited here again. I valued the privileges of that pleasant friendship. I want to ask if you will allow me to replace it by yours?"

"Oh, but you will," she protested.

I knew better. I pressed the point, and she consented prettily.

What Carew had written I never knew, but I was right. Mrs. Whitwell, of course, had to hear the proceedings of the night so far as the Bull was concerned. I was not asked to her house any more, and even Whitwell, having no doubt received some garbled version, was very cool toward me. But I have often since visited the valley and the garden. Carew, on the other hand, was very friendly afterward; and I think I understood the meaning of that revoke.



ADVENTURINGS ^{in the} PSYCHICAL



V.—THE POLTERGEIST AND THE MEDIUM

THE preceding article, it will be remembered, dealt with automatic speaking and writing, phenomena regarded even by many persons of scientific training as affording decisive proof of the truth of spiritism. We have now to consider a very different class of spiritistic manifestations, the so-called "physical phenomena," which are historically among the earliest on record, and at the same time are far more spectacular and sensational than the phenomena produced by the automatic speakers and writers. They include such weird occurrences as the appearance in the séance room of ghostly forms alleged to be spirits "materialized" by the power of the medium; the lifting of the latter from the floor by an invisible force; the touching, pinching, and striking of the sitters by unseen hands, and the movement of small articles of furniture as though alive.

Occasionally, when the medium is particularly gifted, still more striking happenings take place. Thus, at a séance with Eusapia Paladino, attended by such eminent scientists as Professors Lombroso, Bianchi, Tamburini, Vizioli, and Ascensi, men whose veracity is beyond question, it is recorded by Lombroso that:

"We saw a great curtain, which separated our room from an alcove adjoining, and which was more than three feet distant from the medium, suddenly move out toward me, envelop me, and

wrap me close. Nor was I able to free myself from it except with great difficulty.

"A dish of flour had been put in the little alcove room, at a distance of more than four and a half feet from the medium, who, in her trance, had thought, or, at any rate, spoken, of sprinkling some of the flour in our faces. When light was made, it was found that the dish was bottom side up, with the flour under it. This was dry, to be sure, but coagulated, like gelatine. This circumstance seems to me doubly irreconcilable—first, with the laws of chemistry, and, second, with the power of movement of the medium, who had not only been bound as to her feet, but had her hands held tight by our hands.

"When the lights had been turned on, and we were all ready to go, a great wardrobe that stood in the alcove room, about six and a half feet away from us, was seen advancing slowly toward us. It seemed like a huge pachyderm that was proceeding in leisurely fashion to attack us."

Other investigators, men of equally high character, report marvels no less amazing. On at least one occasion, Eusapia Paladino is credited with having created an invisible man, a being which the sitters could distinctly feel, although they could not see it, and which, annoyed by their inquisitive prodding, finally turned on one of them and bit him in the thumb. For this we have the authority of Professors Mor-

seli and Barzini, the latter being the investigator whose thumb was bitten.

Again, two English noblemen, Lords Dunraven and Crawford, affirm that they several times saw another medium, the late D. D. Home, floating through the air; once at a height of more than seventy feet above the ground; and that the same medium, by some "spiritual" agency, was elongated in full view of them, so that they beheld his stature visibly increase, to decrease again to normal height only when he came out of the trance condition.

Unfortunately, the "spirits" that perform these uncanny feats have a strong liking for darkness, a circumstance which has led to wholesale, and repeatedly substantiated, accusations of fraud. In fact, there is no other department of spiritism to which the taint of fraud has so thoroughly attached itself. It is obvious that any clever charlatan, by persuading his sitters that darkness is necessary for the development of occult phenomena, can produce most mystifying effects, and the records of scientific investigations, to say nothing of the records of our police courts, abound in evidence that swindlers have not been slow in availing themselves of this opportunity to prey on the credulous and superstitious. The lengths to which bogus mediums will sometimes go, and the extreme gullibility which renders their operations ridiculously easy and highly profitable, are amusingly illustrated by a story told by Mr. Hereward Carrington, an investigator who has done much to make the public acquainted with the ways of fraudulent "psychics."

One of these, according to Mr. Carrington, had among his patrons an elderly business man, the head of a large concern that manufactured farming implements. After several months of intercourse, during which the medium deftly led him on from marvel to marvel, until at last there was no "phenomenon" too incredible for him to swallow, he was informed that at the next séance he would have the unique experience of conversing with the spirit of a deceased inhabitant of the planet Jupiter.

Sure enough, after the lights had been carefully turned low, he was accosted by a tall, shadowy figure, which announced itself as a spirit from Jupiter, and which, speaking excellent English, proceeded to describe the conditions of life in that far-off sphere. The Jupiterians, it appeared, were a poor, ignorant lot, scarcely removed from barbarism; they were greatly in need of civilization, and any one who should help in civilizing them would be generously rewarded in the future life.

"I should be glad to do all in my power," the business man eagerly volunteered, "but I'm afraid there's nothing I could do."

"Yes, indeed, there is. I understand that you make farm implements and machinery. Well, they haven't as much as a spade on Jupiter. If you would send a few tools there, it would be a great step toward civilizing them."

"But how in the world could I get anything to them?"

"That is quite simple," the "spirit" glibly explained. "Just send the things to the medium here, and he will dematerialize them and ship them to Jupiter, where they will be rematerialized."

Instead of seeing in this a daring attempt to fleece him, the victim joyfully acquiesced, and sent a number of spades, plows, harrows, etc., to the medium, who promptly disposed of them, not to the people of Jupiter, but to a dealer in such articles. Other séances followed, the spirit from Jupiter again appearing and describing in picturesque language the beneficent consequences of the welcome presents. This meant more gifts, which steadily increased in number and value, until the confederate who had been playing the part of the dead Jupiterian finally became frightened.

"Look here," he told the medium, "this has got to stop. It was all very well when you were satisfied with plows, and rakes, and little things like that, but now that you have got him giving you horses and harvesters there's bound to be trouble. He's sure to get wise, and some fine morning we'll wake up on the inside of a jail."

"Oh, don't worry," said the medium. "He'll never get wise to anything."

"I'm not so certain of that. At any rate, you'll have to find somebody to take my place."

One word led to another, and ended in a violent quarrel. The confederate, vowing vengeance, called on the business man, and told him how he had been duped. He was met with the astonishing reply:

"I don't believe a word you say."

"You don't?" he cried. "Didn't you send the medium, only yesterday, a horse and cart to be dematerialized?"

"Yes."

"Well, if you wish to know where they are come with me. He has them in a stable near his house, waiting to find a buyer."

Together they went to the stable, where the confederate pointed out the horse and cart that had been given to the medium. In particular, he identified the cart by the number painted on it.

"Come, now," said he, "you can't deny that's your cart, can you?"

"Why," was the answer, "it does indeed look like my cart. But I know it isn't."

"How do you know it isn't?"

"Because"—in a tone of solemn conviction—"I know that by this time my cart is on Jupiter."

In another case, drawn to my attention by a lawyer friend, the victim was a well-to-do Boston merchant, who had become interested in spiritism shortly after the death of his wife, to whom he had been devotedly attached, and with whose spirit he hoped to be brought into communication. A medium, learning this, determined to profit from his grief and longing, and hired a young woman to pose as the spirit of the dead wife. He was then told that before long it would be possible to "materialize" his wife from the spirit world with such substantiality that he would be able to clasp her in his arms.

When the appointed time came, a slender form, draped in gauze, emerged from the mediumistic cabinet into the darkened séance room, and saluted him

with a joyful cry of "Husband!" There was not light enough to see the "spirit's" face, but he did not for an instant doubt that he was really gazing at his wife, and rose to embrace her. At once the figure vanished, and after the lights were turned up the medium explained that there would have to be a good many "materializations" before the spirit form would be solid enough for him to touch it.

This meant, of course, numerous séances, for which the deluded husband paid handsomely. It also helped to blind him to the true state of affairs, and increased his infatuation to such an extent that when at length the "spirit" submitted to his caresses, it did not seem at all incongruous to find that he was pressing to his breast a flesh-and-blood woman.

The medium now resolved on a bold stroke. Acting under her instruction, the "spirit" bitterly complained one evening that she did not possess any jewelry.

"What!" her "husband" exclaimed. "Do you mean to say that they wear jewelry in the other world?"

"Oh, yes. But nothing to compare with what I had while on earth. What have you done with mine?"

"I have it all—every piece—put away in a little box."

"Good. Then if you will bring it tomorrow night, I can take it with me when I leave you. The medium, you know, can dematerialize it for us."

"I will bring it. Rest assured of that."

Alas for husbandly devotion! The séance at which he turned over the jewelry to the affectionate "spirit" of his wife was the last at which he held communion with her. When he next called, he was told that the medium had been unexpectedly summoned out of town. She never came back.

These two episodes are typical rather than exceptional instances of the sort of thing that has been going on for years in connection with the physical phenomena of spiritism. Its continuance has been made possible largely by a widespread belief, entertained not by

the ignorant and superstitious merely, but by men of distinction in the intellectual and scientific world, that, notwithstanding the prevalence of fraud, there are at least some physical phenomena which must be accounted genuine.

Men like the Italian savants already named, the English naturalist, Alfred Russel Wallace; the great chemist, Sir William Crookes; the French astronomer, Camille Flammarion, and many others who might be mentioned, are satisfied that they have witnessed in the séance room occurrences out of all accord with natural laws, and not to be attributed to fraud.

In support of this view, emphasis is laid on the fact that, leaving out of consideration all mediums who employ their powers as a means of livelihood, physical phenomena of the most bizarre sort have been manifested through men and women in private life, who cannot possibly have a pecuniary motive for deception, and whose character is beyond reproach.

One of the most celebrated of physical mediums, in fact, was a clergyman of the Church of England, the Reverend W. Stainton Moses, a gentleman respected and warmly esteemed by all who knew him.

As a further argument in behalf of the authenticity of certain of the phenomena, attention is also called to the interesting circumstance that, long before spiritism and spiritistic mediums were heard of, similar marvels—including seemingly spontaneous movements of furniture, and the occurrence of mysterious raps, knockings, and other noises—were frequently reported by thoroughly reputable witnesses.

To mention only a few cases, as long ago as 1661 there was an outbreak of this kind at the home of a wealthy Englishman named Mompesson, an invisible ghost for months disturbing the peace of the Mompesson family by beating on a drum, banging at doors, tugging at bedclothes, and hurling household articles about in a most destructive manner. The affair made so much stir that a royal commission was

sent to inquire into it, but signally failed to lay the ghost. For nearly a year, in 1716-17, the Reverend Samuel Wesley, father of the founder of Methodism, was tormented in like fashion at his rectory in Lincolnshire. In 1753 a Russian monastery was invaded by an equally malicious and equally invisible "spirit," which for months amused itself by ringing the monastery bells at unseemly hours. Nine years later all London was thrilled by the celebrated Cock Lane ghost, which produced spirit rappings with as much éclat as the most up-to-date, medium-invoked visitant from "the other side." In none of these instances did contemporary investigators find a wholly satisfactory explanation for the singular phenomena involved.

Nevertheless, it may confidently be affirmed that, instead of strengthening the case for the physical phenomena of spiritism, the doings of the poltergeists—as these tricky ghosts are called by psychical researchers—considerably weaken it. For during recent years a number of poltergeist hauntings have been looked into by members of the Society for Psychical Research, and whenever the conditions have been such as to permit a thorough investigation, it has been found that, so far from being spiritual entities, poltergeists are invariably compounded of deceit, credulity, and delusion. Even more important, from the standpoint of getting at the true inwardness of physical mediumship, the discovery has been made that fraud has frequently been practiced in poltergeist cases without any apparent motive.

Again I will give an instance from actual occurrence, in order to make my meaning perfectly clear. Word was one day received at the London offices of the Society for Psychical Research that a ghost had taken possession of a farmhouse in Shropshire, and was making life miserable for the lawful occupants, a family named Hampson and their two maidservants, Priscilla Evans and Emma Davies. Nobody saw the ghost, but it made its presence felt in true poltergeist style.

It had announced its advent, about four o'clock one fine afternoon, by lifting a saucepan from the kitchen fire and throwing it across the room, picking red-hot coals out of the fire and scattering them over the floor, and by causing a lamp globe to fly miraculously through the air. This last prank, naturally enough, so frightened the Hampsons and their servants that they fled from the house, and summoned aid from the nearest neighbors, among whom was a Mr. Lea, who, in the report that reached the Society for Psychical Research, declared that when he approached the Hampson homestead, it seemed as if all the upstairs rooms were on fire, "as there was such a light in the windows."

Reinforced, the Hampsons made bold to enter the house again, but the poltergeist had seemingly formed a strong dislike to them, for the report added:

"As things were continuing to jump about the kitchen in a manner which was altogether inexplicable, and many were getting damaged, Hampson decided to remove everything out of the apartment. He accordingly took down a barometer from the wall, when something struck him on the leg, and a loaf of bread, which was on the table, was thrown by some invisible means, and hit him on the back. A volume of 'Pilgrim's Progress' was thrown, or jumped, through the window, and a large, ornamental sea shell went through in similar fashion.

"In the parlor a sewing machine was thrown about and damaged. The nurse girl was nursing the baby by the fire when some fire leaped from the grate, and the child's hair was singed and its arms burned. The girl was so alarmed that she set off to a neighbor's, and on the way there her clothes took fire, and had to be torn from her body. During the evening, while the girl was at the neighbor's, a plate, which she touched while having her supper, was repeatedly thrown on the floor, and the pieces were picked up by some unseen agency, and put in the centre of the table."

On the girl's return to the Hampson place the manifestations broke out anew. Mr. and Mrs. Lea were strongly of the opinion that they were the work of the devil; the Hampsons, however, inclined to the view that the blame lay at the door of some evil spirit that was especially desirous of tormenting the nurse girl, Emma Davies, it being noticed that things quieted down whenever she was out of the house. On this theory they sent her to her home in a neighboring village, where the poltergeist continued to annoy her. In the presence of a police officer, watching her closely to detect evidence of fraud, it wrenched the buttons from her dress and ripped out the stitches off her apron. While the village schoolmistress and some twenty other people looked on, it twice drew off her shoes and tossed them to the opposite side of the room; and it was said to have afterward lifted her bodily from the floor, and held her suspended in mid-air.

Clearly, this was a case calling for investigation, and the Society for Psychical Research at once commissioned one of its expert detectives of the supernatural, Mr. F. S. Hughes, to proceed to the scene of the disturbances. But before he arrived the mystery was solved. The girl, it seemed, had been made so nervous and excited by the unwelcome attentions of the poltergeist that it was thought best to place her in a physician's care, and she was accordingly taken to a sanitarium and kept in strict seclusion, under the constant observation of the physician's housekeeper, Miss Turner, a shrewd, level-headed woman. For three days the poltergeist continued to plague her. Then it suddenly took its departure, under the following circumstances, narrated by Mr. Hughes in his official report:

"On Tuesday morning Miss Turner was in an upper room at the back of the house, and the servant of the establishment and Emma Davies were outside, Emma having her back to the house, and unaware that she was observed. Miss Turner noticed that she had a piece of brick in her hand, held behind her back. This she threw to

a distance by a turn of the wrist, and, while doing so, screamed to attract the attention of the servant, who, of course, turning round, saw the brick in the air, and was very much frightened. Emma Davies, looking round, saw that she had been seen by Miss Turner, and, apparently imagining that she had been found out, was very anxious to return home that night.

"Miss Turner took no notice of the occurrence at the time, but the next morning she asked the girl if she had been playing tricks, and the girl confessed that she had, and went through some of the performances very skillfully, according to Miss Turner's account. Later on in the day she repeated these in the presence of the doctor, Miss Turner, and two reporters from London."

Obviously, trickster though she was, the girl had no rational motive for her conduct. It had already cost her a good position, and rendered it most unlikely that she would easily get another. And, in fact, this same absence of motive is conspicuous in nearly all the poltergeist cases exposed by the Society for Psychical Research, and by independent investigators. It is also noteworthy that when discovery is made, the active agent is usually found to be a boy or girl, man or woman, constitutionally or temporarily in an abnormal nervous condition.

The girl, Emma Davies, on the testimony of her mother, was subject to "fits."

In another case, investigated by the Society, the poltergeist was definitely identified with a little deformed girl, twelve years old, of decidedly abnormal characteristics. In a third case, investigated by Mr. Frank Podmore, another member of the Society and a specialist on poltergeists, a confession of fraud was elicited from a neurotic boy of fifteen—a confession only partial, it is true, but in one sense more illuminating than any full confession would have been. The case is so instructive, both for its revelation of the almost incredible credulity of many devotees of spiritism, and for the light it throws on the

problems of physical mediumship, that I quote it, condensed, from Mr. Podmore's detailed review of his investigation.

"In the autumn of 1894," he states, "Mrs. B., a lady living in a provincial town, gave me an account of certain curious incidents which had recently taken place in her house. The occupants of the house—an old one—consisted, besides Mrs. B. and her family, of a widow lady, Mrs. D., and her two children, a girl of about twenty, C. D., and a boy of fifteen, E. D.

"Mrs. B., C. D., and E. D. had been in the habit of trying experiments with planchette in the evening. Planchette had given them to understand that the house was haunted by four spirits, a wicked marquis, a wicked monk, a lay desperado, and a virtuous and beautiful young lady. These spirits wrote, through planchette, of treasure concealed in the house, of a hidden chamber, and many other matters. Among other proofs were the following:

"One evening after dark, Mrs. B., in accordance with directions received through planchette, went with C. D. and E. D. to an old oak tree in the garden, and, standing with the girl and boy on either side, holding a hand of each, she distinctly heard a stone strike the garden roller a few feet off. The phenomenon was repeated twice; and her companions solemnly assured her that they had no part in the performance.

"On another occasion, sitting in a bedroom in the dark, with only E. D. in the room, Mrs. B. was struck by a stone on the temple, heard objects thrown about the room, felt an arm put through hers, and so on. Some of these phenomena occurred when she was alone in the room—but with the door, I gathered, not shut.

"Mrs. B. one morning placed a white chrysanthemum bouquet on the boughs of the oak tree. It disappeared shortly afterward, and on the next morning two other small bouquets were found there. Mrs. B. asked for whom these were intended, and went away, leaving pencil and paper. On her return she found

the paper torn in half, and the initials of her own Christian name, and that of C. D., written on the two halves respectively, with a bouquet on each half.

"About this time a secret chamber was discovered, with the skeleton of a cat crouching in act to spring, and the skeleton of a woman. Asked more particularly about the latter, Mrs. B. said: 'Well, at least a skull and some bones—but it was a woman's skull.'

"A few days after receiving this account, I went down by invitation to the house. I saw Mrs. D. and her two children, and received from them ungrudging corroboration of Mrs. B.'s marvelous story. In E. D.'s company I penetrated the secret chamber, and found there the mummified skeleton of what might have been a cat—but nothing else. In removing the stains left by this exploit, I contrived a tête-à-tête interview with E. D., and asked him: 'How much did you do of all these things?' He replied: 'Oh, not much. I only did a few little things.'

"Pressed on particular points, he admitted having thrown *one* stone at the garden roller, and having also thrown a trouser button against the wall when sitting alone in the bedroom with Mrs. B. He denied having produced the other phenomena on those occasions. Asked as to the bouquets, he said he had not placed them on the tree. Pressed a little more, he said: 'If I did it, it must have been without knowing it.' This without any suggestion from me as to possible somnambulism, or unconscious action. He assured me that his sister had had no hand in this matter. I could not get any more out of him, as he was shortly after called away.

"I subsequently learned from his mother that E. D. was so nervous and delicate that he slept in her room at night; that he was not allowed to do much mental work; that he was subject to attacks of somnambulism; and had, indeed, fallen into a semiconscious state only a few days before, during a lesson in carpentry."

Probably the whole affair originated in a moment of mischief, and was car-

ried on and elaborated because of an uncontrollable, and perhaps not entirely conscious, desire on the part of the abnormally conditioned lad to mystify the too easily imposed upon elderly lady.

In point of fact, the investigations of the Society for Psychical Research made it certain that in nine cases out of ten a poltergeist is a by-product of hysteria, using the term in its strictest medical sense. As is well known, one of the distinctive symptoms of hysteria is a tendency to indulge in all manner of lies and deceptions, coupled often with almost diabolical cleverness in giving these lies and deceptions a color of reality. Impulse to such trickery may arise from a great variety of motives; frequently, it would seem, from nothing more than an abnormal craving for notoriety and admiration. Certainly, the hysterical young people run to earth by the poltergeist hunters of the Society for Psychical Research did not engage in their hoaxings because they expected to make money out of them.

The bearing of all this on the physical phenomena of spiritism is surely self-evident. It shows, for one thing, that the money motive is not the only motive inciting mediums to fraud; that when a neurotic or hysterical condition is present, the best of characters is no guarantee against duplicity; and that under such circumstances the detection of fraud is exceedingly difficult, particularly in the case of witnesses predisposed to regard the phenomena as genuine. If hysterical children can, as they have often done, carry on a course of deception mystifying a whole community, it is manifest that mediums of similar hysterical tendencies, working under cover of darkness or in a dim light, can more or less readily deceive the most expert observers; and, moreover, that they may be only partially, if at all, conscious of their own frauds.

Further, in estimating the nature of the phenomena produced at the séances of physical mediums, it is imperative to take into account the innumerable possibilities of malobservation on the part of the spectators. Experience has shown that comparatively few people,

no matter how honest, are trustworthy witnesses even when conditions for observation are of the best.

For proof of this, one does not need to look beyond the courtroom, where every day perfectly honest people give the most contradictory accounts of some simple occurrence. If it is thus difficult to see correctly what goes on in the broad light of day, it surely is far more difficult to be certain of exactly what is happening in a room where there is darkness rather than light. Besides which, the imaginative faculty may be excited to such an extent that the sitters at a séance may not only be misled into making inaccurate reports of what really occurred, but they may even, and with absolute sincerity, testify to phenomena which did not occur at all.

A friend of mine, now a physician in Maryland, used to amuse himself in his student days by playing medium at table-tipping séances. He would cause the table to rap out messages to various acquaintances of his, none of whom were spiritists, but several of whom became intensely interested owing to their inability to fathom the source of the communications they received, my friend managing things so skillfully that they did not suspect him of hoaxing them.

One evening the table announced the presence of the "spirit" of a little child, the daughter of a lady well known to most of the sitters. They were not aware, however, that my friend was intimately acquainted with the little one's life history, and when, utilizing this knowledge, he proceeded to make the table rap communications of a most personal character, there was considerable excitement. Suddenly a lady present, not a relative of the dead child, uttered a piercing scream, and fainted.

When she was revived, she declared, with emphatic assurance, that she had seen the head of a child emerge from the centre of the table.

Equally indicative of the part imagination plays in constructing spiritistic phenomena is an experience of my own with a New York medium. His specialty was materialization, but at the

séance in question—perhaps because he suspected that I was present with an idea of exposing him—he did not attempt to develop "spirit forms" by any of the methods in vogue among materializers. Instead, the gas having been lowered until the room was almost in total darkness, he went into a "trance," and, seated at the séance table, with his head resting on his hands, declaimed in a singsong voice:

"The spirits are coming. I can feel them approaching. You will be able to see them soon. They are almost here. Here is one now, on my left. Can't you see it? And here comes another, and another. They are crowding around me, so anxious to communicate with you. Can't you see them? I can't hold them long; they will be gone soon. Oh, can't you see them?"

There were, perhaps, a dozen people present, including myself and a fellow investigator, who had accompanied me. Of the others, three responded to the hypnotic suggestiveness of the medium's words and manner, and solemnly declared that they could see a "spirit" hovering about him. One lady, whose integrity I could not doubt, insisted that she saw two "spirits," which she identified as her dead husband and brother.

Undoubtedly, therefore, it is proper to assume that when, in the instances cited at the beginning of this article, Professor Lombroso, sitting with Eusapia Paladino, saw a huge wardrobe advance to attack him; and when Lords Crawford and Dunraven saw the medium Home floating through the air, hallucination rather than "spirit action" is the correct explanation. At all events, in view of the known fallibility of the human senses, the manifold opportunities for fraud open to mediums, and the fact that, with the single exception of Home, every medium subjected to scientific investigation has been caught practicing fraud at one time or another, it seems rash to accept any of the phenomena of physical mediumship.

Still, it would be incorrect to say that the time devoted by psychical researchers to the investigation of these phenomena has been time wasted.

THE CONDITION OR THE MAN



MABEL HERBERT URNER
AND
FREDERIC ARNOLD KUMMER

Mountain Summit House,
Catskill, N. Y., August 9, 1908.

MY DEAR GRACE: If I had thought you would be guilty of such petty jealousy as your last letter shows, I would never have written you about Miss Gilman at all. Don't worry, please. I am in no danger from *her*. She knows all about you and the children. But for the musical gift which we have in common, I doubt if an attractive young woman, of her wealth and position, would have taken any notice of me at all. She plays my accompaniments divinely, and has actually memorized things like "Danny Deever," "The Erlking," "The Toreador," etc., and has helped to make this God-forsaken place less lonely.

It's just my hard luck to have chosen this desolate mountain resort for my first vacation since our marriage. This kind of thing seems to have followed me persistently for the whole five years. The two weeks here have been beneficial in one respect, though. Absence from office and home worries has given me a new perspective, and I have come to some very definite conclusions. They will startle you, no doubt, and probably hurt some, too, but it is my duty to tell you what is on my mind.

Our marriage was a terrible mistake. Reflection out here in the hills has convinced me that there should be a law to prevent highly emotional, overgrown "children," such as we were, from making fools of themselves by

getting married. A man has no right to take a wife and produce a family until he has not only sufficient money in the bank to assure his independence, but a position with a future to it as well. This "Love in a Cottage" and "The Lord Will Provide" stuff is all rot. Our case proves it.

Here am I, just twenty-four years old, only one year your senior, with you and three children to support, on a salary of twenty-five dollars a week as a stenographer. And then, because you couldn't get along with mother, there's five a week that must be contributed toward *her* support. When an opportunity for advancement does present itself, I dare not attempt it. *The conditions won't let me!*

There is no question but that in settling down to married life at nineteen years of age, I handicapped myself hopelessly. During the past two years there were three chances where I might have gone on the road as a traveling salesman. Selwin did it. He was dubbing along as cost clerk at eight hundred dollars per year. One of the New York territory men died, and Selwin replaced him. He made good at fifteen hundred dollars.

Now look at him. He's general sales manager for the New England territory at seventy-five hundred dollars a year. And he never even graduated from public school! Why, I used to have to compose his letters for him.

But he was unhampered, and could afford to take a chance. They say it

was his personality and entertaining gifts that made him. Well, I'm there in that line myself, I think. I could certainly make good if Selwin could.

But suppose I had taken the job and fallen down? Where would we all have been, then? Failure is something a married man has to consider. There are thousands of skilled men clamoring for clerical jobs and willing to give their services at bargain-counter rates. I would be up against it for fair, wouldn't I, if I took a chance and happened to fail? You, mother, and three children to support! What a chance! And not a penny in the bank.

Then, again, your sense of proprietorship, and your constant suggestion of loneliness and doubt about me when away, have always prevented me from even thinking of any position that would keep me from home for several weeks at a time. Even my simple reference to Miss Gilman has aroused a protest from you, and I've not been here two weeks.

Honestly, I'm getting sick of the grinding, humdrum existence we are living. It's the same thing over and over again, without variation. Don't think for a moment that my companionship here with Miss Gilman is responsible for these thoughts. They were simply bound to come as a result of my being permitted to give thought to these things for the first time.

I can't help but think of Courtleigh. You remember him—the elongated, sal-low-faced Englishman who used to work in the department with me? He had the right idea, I guess. Instead of tying himself up with a wife and family, he mixed with the sort of people that would be of value to him.

His only asset was his ability to play golf. The treasurer of the company wanted to become expert in the game, and took Courtleigh to his country club over week-ends. Result—he has just married a dream of a girl with lots of money, and they say she really cares for him, though I can't see how that is possible. He's a lightweight, I think. They are off on their honeymoon now—a tour of the Continent.

He returns in the fall, and will stick to this line of business, but not in a clerical capacity—not a bit of it. The confidence her money begot has resulted in his being given charge of our new branch at Hartford, and he doesn't even have to touch a penny of her income, for they are sending him his stock on consignment. Courtleigh hasn't anything on me. I could have done this. But I'm yoked, and that's my finish, I suppose.

Then there's that namby-pamby fellow, Gorlitz. He played the violin pretty well, but that's about all he could do—except to “play the game.” His wife's money has landed him at the head of a big conservatory in Chicago. Now everybody calls him “that brilliant and talented virtuoso.” Great, isn't it?

I'm not arguing in favor of money marriages, but who knows what my future might not have been, with the voice I have, if I had only had the proper opportunity to develop it. As it is, lack of time and money gives the centre of the stage to our youngsters for their howling specialty.

Frankly, Grace, I can't see any way out of the rut, and it looks to me as though my fate is to be the same as Culver's, who still plugs away at his typewriter for the magnificent salary of thirty dollars a week, after having been with the company over eighteen years. I shudder to think of him—bald-headed, watery-eyed because of the electric lights' havoc, pigeon-breasted, stoop-shouldered—a servile hireling—complacent as a lamb under the dictatorial tyranny of the treasurer, who hasn't half his brains.

There he sits, a living preachment of the folly of early marriages, and the ruined careers which go with them. Five children and his other responsibilities have forced him to accept his fate philosophically. His is the same routine over and over; the same seat at the same desk, the same regular hours of service, and the invariable three cigars a day—his only luxury. A tall chair at the quick-lunch room always at the same hour, and the same monotonous grind week in and week out, for three

hundred and sixty-five days in the year, except Sundays and holidays, for *eighteen years*.

Is it any wonder that his ambition has been crushed, and finally killed? Just a human machine is left—that's all. A fine outlook for me, isn't it? The corporations want married men with families for these clerical jobs; the "average" proves that they can be kept closest to the grindstone.

There are all kinds of instances to cite, but what's the use? I'm up against it, that's all—the support of the family, and mother, the doctor's bills, the dentist's bills, house rent, weekly installment payments, and a hundred and one similar petty burdens drag me down, and keep me in with the big mass of Culvers.

But, great God! If I were only free and unhampered, with the knowledge that I have now, I *know* I could do big things. I have determination, ability, energy, but I am hopelessly outclassed by young, unmarried men, who are responsible only to themselves.

The whole condition has got on my nerves. I suppose it's back to the same old grind next week, but I've got to a point where I resent it, and I would welcome *anything*, I think, for a change.

I don't suggest a remedy. There isn't any. Your disgusted husband,

HARRY.

New York, Aug. 11, 1908.

HARRY: Yes, there is a remedy. When this reaches you, the children and I will be at my brother Will's farm. Your letter broke me down. I went through two days that I shall never forget. But I've passed the hysterical period now; and I am writing you with the same brutal disregard for your feelings that you have shown for mine.

You seem to have forgotten that it was your hot-blooded importuning that forced my consent to our early marriage. I feared then it was a mistake—but you overruled me. You took me from a good office position where I had easy hours and fifteen dollars a week. I was independent then. Now what have you given me in exchange?

I have worked for you harder than I would have worked in any office. I have suffered for you, borne you three children, and gradually got together a comfortable little home. And I have uncomplainingly put up with your thoughtlessness and selfishness. When you consider from what you took me, you will have to agree that, so far, I have had the worst of the bargain. But I've tried to make the best of it, always looking toward the future, and thanking God for three healthy, normal children.

A young man in the twenties, concluding that he is a failure, doesn't measure up very strong, in my judgment. But should you never get out of the clerical rut, there could have been the gratification of making of your children what you failed to make of yourself. I am afraid, however, that you are too self-centred to see things in just this way.

Jealousy is a failing that any woman who truly loves a man cannot escape. My objection to your traveling was for your own good. It was a maternal feeling more than anything else that prompted my attitude. You are not any too strong, and Doctor Gregg's advice decided me.

You dwell at great length on your hampered condition and your missed opportunities. *How about mine?* But for your impetuous urging of our marriage I might have been as well off now as some of my girl friends.

Look at Alice Granger, who was in my class at the business college, and whose standing was always below mine. She has worked up from a twelve-dollar-a-week position to that of private secretary, at twelve hundred dollars a year.

Helen Beaumont, my chum, who used to play opposite to me in our dramatic club work, has made a big hit on the stage. She is now playing the leading part in one of Hardman's companies.

Anna Lynch has opened her own typewriting office in the Royal Trust Building, and has enough work to keep three girls employed all the time.

Then there's Jane Sergeant, who took

my position at the office. She has married the junior member of the firm, who came there after I left. And I understand they are very happy.

On the other side, there are cases of many young married men we know—George Bell, Tom Welsh, Howard Mason, and a dozen others—who, in spite of greater handicaps than you have had, have risen to enviable places from positions much inferior to yours.

But, as you say, what's the use of quoting these things? I, too, could go on indefinitely. Summed up, Harry, the only conclusion any fair-minded person can form is that it is not the *condition* that is at fault, but the *man*. A real man, instead of complaining like a spoiled child, would get out and do things! He would prove himself worthy of his wife's sacrifices. A man like Culver is in the position he occupies simply because he belongs there.

And now, since you've expressed yourself in this way, and have forced me to form the opinion I now have of you, it's plain we can't go along on the old basis. You haven't the proper regard, to say nothing of love, either for the children or for me. And I have no desire to stand in the way of your success.

Since Mollie's death Will has been alone on the farm; and he says he will be only too glad to have the children and me there to make the place less desolate. And, of course, I can take care of the house, and he will not need to keep a girl. The work will be no harder there than it has been here. And we will have just as good a home.

I have taken with me everything that I want—the children's clothes, my own, and a few things I had before we were married. You can stay on at the flat, or sublet it or sell out—whatever best suits your plans.

So now you can go out into the world, unhampered and unfettered, and make of yourself the big success that you claim is possible.

Meanwhile, don't come to me to talk matters over. There's no use. You've shown yourself in a new light, and it would be futile for you to attempt to

rekindle my love. That belongs to the past, and to the man I thought you were.

GRACE.

Letter received August 12, 1908, by Mrs. Grace Robinson.

Office of Mandel & Lee, Solicitors;
Melbourne, Australia, June 23, 1908.
To Miss Grace Beckett, care William Beckett, Esq., Hillside Farm, Trenton, N. J.

DEAR MADAM: As executors of the estate of your uncle, the late Samuel M. Beckett, we inclose herewith legal papers for your execution.

On receipt of these, duly attested, we will forward to you bank draft for £7,000 (\$35,000), which, according to the terms of your uncle's will, is your portion of his estate. An equal sum has been left your brother, William G. Beckett, and your sister, Fanny Beckett Rice, to whom we are sending similar papers of this date.

It will expedite the settling of the estate if all papers are promptly returned.

Faithfully yours,

MANDEL & LEE.

The Farm, January 6, 1909.

DEAR FANNY: You know how I hate to write letters. I put it off from day to day; and now so much has happened since you were here, I hardly know where to begin.

That deal with the Acme Rubber Company that the lawyer was negotiating was put through all right. He secured for me a third interest as silent partner; and already we have been offered twenty per cent. advance on the twenty thousand dollars paid. But Mr. Klein advises me not to sell. He says it is a healthy-growing manufacturing plant and an excellent investment.

And now the strange part of it all is that, without his knowledge of my interest in the firm, Harry has been employed as traveling salesman!

I heard that he was still looking for a better position, and Mr. Klein, through a mutual friend, managed to let him know that the Acme Rubber Company were in need of an assistant manager, and advised him to apply.

Why did I do this? Because I wanted to give him a chance, and because I suppose I still care for him. He is my children's father—and the years we lived together. Oh, there is so much I *cannot forget!* It is so fearful to think that after the love and intimacy of marriage people should be estranged.

Yesterday, in going through a trunk, I came across an old waistcoat of his. There still lingered about it the faint odor of cigars. I buried my face in it and cried. I could not help it. It seemed to bring back the first few months of our marriage when we were so happy together—and when I loved him so! Oh, if one could only go back! My life is so empty now. Of course, I have the children. But a woman—a real woman wants more than that.

I try to think of that letter he wrote and harden my heart against him; and yet I find myself constantly hoping that it was only his failures and hardships that embittered him, and that success may bring out the better things that I still believe are in him; and that in the end he will come back to me—in a way that I can let him come.

Oh, I know you will think I am foolish. But, after all, I am a woman, alone, who, in spite of her disillusionment still has a lingering love and belief in her husband.

Pray with me that the future will justify this belief.

Your lonely sister,
GRACE.

New York, March 5, 1910.

MY DEAR GRACE: I am glad to hear, through your brother, that the children and yourself are getting along so well. I have been so busy during the past year, and away so much, that it has been impossible for me to get out and see them, and, under the circumstances, I am not sure that it would have been best.

I am sure you must see now that our separation was best for us both. The splendid success that I have made proves that I was right when I said that, with proper chance, I could make

good. *Now I have done it*, and I have nobody to thank for it but myself. I have won out through my own ability, and that alone, just as I told you I would. It was very decent of you to see things in the proper light; a man like me cannot be kept down, and, while some people might say that I took strong measures to free myself from the tangle of circumstances that hampered me, it takes strong measures nowadays to win success, and a man has got to consider himself and his future first, last, and all the time, or he will never get anywhere.

All this talk about living for others is well enough theoretically, but it is the fellow who gets out and hustles for himself who wins success in the business world to-day.

I suppose you have heard about what I have done. In a little over a year I have made myself the star salesman of the Acme Rubber Company, and on the first of January I am to take charge of the Cleveland office, so I guess there is no doubt that I made the right move.

Of course, I am sorry that you cannot share my success with me, but I am sure you will see now what a wretched mistake our marriage was. Just look at the difference—all those years of monotonous laboring, with my nose to the grindstone, with you, compared to my present success as soon as I got free and in a position to do myself justice. It isn't right for a man to be tied hand and foot, and then expect him to compete with the best of them. What help did I ever get from you, I should like to know? What, in fact, but hindrance always, except at last, when you had the decency to give me a chance to make good?

I have met some one now who understands what I am trying to do, and whose association, instead of dragging me back by a load of petty complaints, helps me and encourages me. Her sympathy, her brightness, her gay and charming personality have made life seem a new thing to me, and she has connections, too, that are going to be worth a lot to me in the future. Her mere presence is a constant inspiration

in my work, and with her assistance I intend later on to buy an interest in the business, and be something more than a mere salaried employee.

You must see, of course, how impossible the present situation is. We can't go on like this. It isn't fair to me, and hurts me in my business. Only the other day I was dining with the young lady I have just spoken of, and Huntley came in with his wife, and didn't even speak to me.

Things have got to be straightened out, and the best way—in fact, the only way—to do is to have a divorce at once. I will allow you to bring the suit, of course; it won't take you much longer to acquire a residence where you are now. You will not find me difficult to deal with in the matter.

I will see that you have enough to live on comfortably—in the country, of course—you could hardly expect me to keep you in city life; and then, too, it would be bad for the children. I will let you have the custody of them, of course. It will be much better for them, as long as they are so young, to have the benefit of your care. When they grow older, and know more about their father, they will naturally turn to him, and look up to and respect him, as a man who has succeeded against great odds—provided, of course, you do nothing to prejudice them against me, and I hardly think you would be capable of that.

I want to arrange everything for your comfort, you understand that, I know, and I hope you will interpose no obstacles. After all, what would be the use? You have failed to make me happy yourself, why not give another woman a chance to succeed where you

have failed—to be what you, it seems, were unable to be, a successful wife?

Please let me hear from you as soon as possible so that we can arrange a conference and settle matters once and for all. Sincerely yours, HARRY.

Hillside Farm, March 18, 1910.

If I were a bigger, finer woman, I suppose I would not let you know that you owe your success to me. But I am weak enough to *want* you to know it, and to know, too, that any lingering respect and fondness that I may still have had for you are dead now.

The day after we separated, I received word that Uncle Beckett had died, leaving Will, Fanny, and me thirty-five thousand dollars each. My lawyer invested twenty thousand dollars of that in the Acme Rubber Company, and it was at my request that you were indirectly told of the opening there, and given the position.

I wanted you to have your chance. Perhaps I still believed it might bring out some latent manhood that I hoped was there. I know better now.

You are welcome to any help I have given you—and to your freedom. I wish no settlement of any kind, either for me or the children. The only condition I make is that the children remain *mine—wholly mine*. That you relinquish all rights to them. As you have shown for them so little interest, you will probably agree to this.

My lawyer's address is E. W. Klein, 78 Broadway. You will make all arrangements with him, as I have no desire ever to see you again.

I hope the woman you now wish to marry will be the help and inspiration that I have failed to be. GRACE.



AFTER ALL

FATE, with the lees that others would not drain,
Thy cup hath filled.
Quaff thou them gladly, for 'tis true that Pain
Is Joy distilled.

ANNE PARTLAN.

THE RETURN OF THE EXPATRIATE



By Mollie Elliot Seawell

CON A brilliant May afternoon, Courtenay and his wife sat on the wide balcony of their Paris house, overlooking a splendid avenue, and were very unhappy. They often figured in the society journals as "prominent members of the American colony in Paris"; that is to say, they were voluntary expatriates.

The primary excuse for the Courtenays' expatriation was, at that moment, in evidence—Lenore, an adorable creature, sweet and twenty. Great masses of blue hydrangeas made a lovely background for her clinging white gown, her flower-crowned hat, worthy a nymph's wearing, her soft, radiant face, and her eyes like brown velvet. Not since she was five years old had she seen her native land, but, by some odd twist of fate, Lenore was as distinctively American as if she had never been fifty miles from the Statue of Liberty on Bedloe's Island. Especially she had the American trick of a wide, frank, and innocent gaze into the eyes of men, and a sly American humor; both of which were distressing to her parents.

In every city of Europe this American colony exists. One half of it is made up of women who allege that they reside abroad for the education of their children. At intervals, a wrinkled, worried, worn, and weary man appears from America, who is proclaimed as the husband and father of the family. The natives privately consider him a desperate rake whose legitimate family is in America.

Courtenay, a handsome, iron-gray man, was one of the few men in the American colony—for men are as scarce as seventeen-year locusts among the expatriates. He did not look wan, wrinkled, weary, or worn, but excessively worried, and the cause of it was an open letter which he was pondering. Mrs. Courtenay, also handsome and ruthlessly elegant, was a picture of politely suppressed fury.

"It's no use, Charlotte," said Courtenay, "you have tried a half a dozen times to get American ambassadors here to dinner, and they won't come."

"I think I've solved the mystery," struck in Lenore, in a voice sweet and vibrant, and very American in its intonations. "Last night, at dinner, I sat next Bonifan, and he told me up and down that the state department at Washington instructed the whole diplomatic body to have as little to do with expatriated Americans as possible."

"Exactly like Bonifan," Courtenay replied angrily. "Because the fellow is a French Creole, and has been first secretary here for twenty years, he thinks he can take liberties. What else did he tell you?"

"He told me," continued Lenore, a deep flush coming into her face, "that after Americans had lived abroad for a certain number of years, they lost their citizenship. We are not Americans any longer."

Then, like a jack-in-the-box, Bonifan himself suddenly appeared upon the balcony, ushered by a noiseless footman,

and accompanied by a man, iron-gray like Courtenay, but much younger and totally different, whom Bonifan introduced.

"My friend, Mr. Lyndhurst—a member of Congress, who comes over once a year to recommend my removal."

Bonifan, small, bright-eyed, and who was born on the French side of Canal Street, in New Orleans, might have been mistaken for a Frenchman. But, like Lenore, the more violently fate tried to make him foreign, the more obstinately American he remained.

Lenore, for once, left Bonifan, of whom she was extravagantly fond, to her father and mother, and coolly appropriated Lyndhurst, the newcomer, a clear-cut, clean-limbed man, with an eye to charm women and dogs. And in ten minutes something happened to Lyndhurst—he looked too long in Lenore's velvet eyes.

Bonifan, seeing how things were going, made no move to leave until the Courtenays' motor car rolled into the courtyard below for their afternoon airing in the Bois de Boulogne.

Then the whole party descended together, Lyndhurst still at Lenore's side; the girl's smiles and delicately flushed cheeks invited him.

As Bonifan and Lyndhurst were standing hat in hand saying good-by to Lenore, a clatter of hoofs came pounding up the splendid, sunny street, and a troop of Blue Hussars, with a young officer sitting square and soldierlike on his black charger, trotted past. Military etiquette prevented the young officer from turning his head toward the courtyard, but a glance from his black eyes flashed toward the girl with the velvet brown eyes, and brought a brilliant smile to her face. When the motor whirled off, and Bonifan and Lyndhurst were walking along the bright street, Bonifan said:

"That Blue Hussar is the Vicomte D'Auriac; has a magnificent old mother, who speaks of the Comte De Chambord as Henri Cinq. This vicomte admires Lenore a little too much."

"And Miss Courtenay likes him?" asked Lyndhurst.

"Oh, yes, as a girl likes a Blue Hussar. But it is one of those inconsiderable things, like *Romeo's* first love. The girl has a heart—a warm, throbbing heart. Also, all the brains in the family. I should like to see her in time an American ambassadress."

"She is quite equal to it," replied Lyndhurst, with energy, for he was hard hit at his first encounter with Lenore.

But there were many other encounters, and in a fortnight Bonifan's practiced eye saw the beginning of one of the most promising love affairs he had ever known.

Paris, in spring, lends itself to love-making. Every day there was some plan, engineered by the resolute Lyndhurst or the skillful Bonifan, by which Lyndhurst could spend some hours in Lenore's sweet presence. The Vicomte D'Auriac was often present, to Lyndhurst's secret chagrin.

But in time—in a little time—Lyndhurst saw a change in Lenore. At first, her eyes met Lyndhurst's frankly, and dropped before D'Auriac's. Then, she gazed with calm indifference at the Blue Hussar, and hung out a red flag in either cheek and looked downward when Lyndhurst came within the magnetic current.

When things had got so far, Lyndhurst began to watch for his chance to speak the winged word. It came on a June afternoon at a little fête in the Bois de Boulogne. Just beyond the open, grassy space where the music played and the crowd of splendidly gowned women and distinguished men laughed and chatted, was a group of tall, late-blooming lilac trees that drenched the air with perfume. By a clever manoeuvre Lyndhurst got Lenore in that spot, sequestered, though not remote, and in six words told his story.

"I am not thinking of marrying any one," Lenore murmured, with the troubled eyes of a maid. "It is so difficult to make up one's mind whether one loves."

"No, it is not," stoutly protested Lyndhurst, seeing that the standard was coming down from the citadel.

He caught her warm, unresisting hand in his, but at that moment they both started apart. Across the grass, coming toward them, was a lady, silver-haired, but with a figure slim and elegant at sixty.

"It is the Vicomtesse D'Auriac," said Lyndhurst quickly to Lenore.

Madame D'Auriac made straight for the two, under the bending sweet lilacs, and, bowing, said in perfectly good English:

"This, I believe, is Miss Courtenay. May I take an old woman's privilege with you, and a liberty with this gentleman, and ask for a few minutes' private conversation?"

Lyndhurst lifted his hat and vanished. Madame D'Auriac was accustomed to making men and women do her bidding.

"I am the Vicomtesse D'Auriac," she said, laying a slender gloved hand on Lenore's arm, and speaking in a voice made to charm. "I want you to believe that I have great sympathy with youth. I am sixty years old, but I still read romances. You are so pretty, so elegant, I am not surprised that you appeal very strongly to my son."

A warm wave of color flooded Lenore's face, as she stood, silent and attentive.

"My son, you know," continued Madame D'Auriac, in the same soft voice, "is the head of his family. There is not much money in the family, but I would not have my son repair his fortunes except by honorable means. Now, there is an opportunity for him to do this. I will not tell you the name of the young lady, but she has a name quite worthy of my son's. She is in herself all that the most exacting mother could ask, and she has permitted herself to think of my son. Her family connections can help my son in his career. Are you surprised that I wish him to make that marriage?"

"No, I am not," replied Lenore coolly. The marriage of Victor D'Auriac to another woman had become indifferent to her.

"My son, however," continued Madame D'Auriac, "is bewitched with you.

But if he marries you it will mean a great sacrifice for him. Now, let me tell you something, looking back over the painful path of life. A man often makes great sacrifices to marry a woman. I never knew a case in which the sacrifice would have been made twice. That is a hard saying, but it is true."

Madame D'Auriac paused, and, looking with a strange, calm pathos into Lenore's eyes, added gently:

"We women think too much of love—ah, me!"

The blood dropped out of Lenore's face as wine is poured from a glass. She was not thinking of D'Auriac, but of Lyndhurst. "We women think too much of love!" Then, in the midst of her trembling emotion, her woman's sharp wit told her that she was being covertly told she was no match for the Vicomte D'Auriac.

"You give me to understand, madame," she said, in a clear and softly resonant voice, "there is a young lady who is in love with the Vicomte D'Auriac. Well, she may have him. He has not offered me the honor of an alliance with the house of D'Auriac, but I decline it in advance."

Madame D'Auriac, smiling, and pitying, and forgiving the girl's calm impertinence, was not the less determined to bind the bargain.

"I thank you," she said. "You have shown a wonderfully quick appreciation of what I said, but I tell you this, that you are much too charming for my son to take a mere refusal from you. You must do something more decisive—go to America for a few months, perhaps. It does not take long for men to forget. How sad that is!"

"I can do something more decisive still," answered Lenore, with suppressed passion in her voice. "I can marry. I can make what is called a splendid marriage—a man who is not the head of his family, but who will be the first of his family."

Madame D'Auriac started. Lenore was rushing much farther than she had expected. She laid a friendly hand on Lenore's arm.

"Are you not rash?" she asked.

"No," replied Lenore, "I am prudent. Did you, madame, ever know a woman who had more than one chance of marrying a man of the highest character, splendid talents, great charm, with a brilliant future before him? Women much older than I tell me such a thing never comes to a woman but once. I thank you very much for this interview. It has determined me to do the most prudent and sensible thing in the world, and to give the Vicomte D'Auriac to the young lady who wants him."

Madame D'Auriac could afford to take this calmly.

"I perfectly understand my son's infatuation for you," she said, and moved away, stately, distinguished, victorious.

Lenore walked a little way into the deeper seclusion of the lilacs. She knew Lyndhurst would come to seek her. In five minutes he was there. It was plain that something cataclysmal had happened during the interview between the great French lady and the young American girl. Lenore turned on Lyndhurst a vivid face, with eyes all fire and dew.

"Just now," she said, "you told me you loved me, and I said I was not thinking of marrying any one. I will deal with you honestly, and tell you that something has happened that makes me perfectly willing to marry you if only you will agree to marry me."

Lyndhurst caught her hand.

"I'll agree," he said.

"In this spot," continued Lenore, "not five minutes ago, Madame D'Auriac asked me not to marry her son. She said it would not be advantageous for him, and he would regret it."

"Perhaps he would; he is probably an infernal scoundrel," was Lyndhurst's generous comment on his rival.

Then Lyndhurst added gravely: "But how stands your heart toward D'Auriac?"

Lenore looked at him with that wide-eyed frankness which he adored.

"I fancied him a little—before I met you. But now, I often can't remember the days I see him and the days I do not."

"That is enough!" said Lyndhurst.

The place was retired enough for one swift embrace, one burning kiss. D'Auriac was forgotten.

That day two months the Vicomte D'Auriac was married to a very splendid young lady of great family and fortune. The day before, Lenore Courtenay and Lyndhurst had been married, and were then crossing a blue and sunlit sea on their way to America.

One night, twelve years later, Bonifan, as first secretary of the American embassy, headed the embassy staff that awaited at the great St. Lazare Station the boat train which was to bring the new ambassador and ambassadress. Bonifan had grown twelve years younger in that time. His eyes were brighter, his wits sharper, his subordinates had a wholesome fear and admiration for him as a man likely to live and die as first secretary. On this evening Bonifan was radiant.

When the train pulled in, and the new ambassador and ambassadress, Lyndhurst and Lenore, stepped out, Bonifan thought he had never seen a finer flowering of two lives. Lyndhurst, always distinguished in appearance, had the magnetic charm of a man who has won all the great sweepstakes in life. Lenore seemed to Bonifan to have grown taller; she had certainly become stately, and her girlish grace had been exchanged for a dignity not less a grace. Three beautiful boys, with their maid and tutor, followed their parents from the railway carriage.

When the introductions were over, the Lyndhursts asked Bonifan, as an old friend, to drive to the embassy and remain to dinner, and Bonifan was glad to accept. Every moment indicated his satisfaction with the new envoys—nothing could be better. Bonifan chuckled to himself all during the cheerful little dinner.

Afterward, when they were sitting together in a little boudoir, next the room that was to be Lyndhurst's study, Bonifan began to talk business.

"There is one of your old friends, my dear lady," he said to Lenore,

"whose name you must not utter. That is Commandant Vicomte D'Auriac."

"What has he done?" asked Lenore calmly.

"Nothing, as far as the world will hear for a couple of weeks yet, but I happen to know that a secret code book which an officer is supposed to guard with his life has disappeared from D'Auriac's possession, and has been sold by a serpent of a woman that D'Auriac preferred to his wife. Some of the military people think D'Auriac gave it to the serpent to sell; others that she stole it, and that D'Auriac should not be condemned on the word of a serpent. The military authorities are keeping deadly quiet about it just now. D'Auriac's wife suspects something, and has run away from Paris. She is a poor creature. Not so his mother. She stands up as brave as a marshal of France."

"I remember her well—she did me the greatest favor in the world once," said Lenore, with a sidelong, laughing glance at Lyndhurst, who was not smiling.

"You will come face to face with her at the dinner the prime minister is giving for you next week at the Quai d'Orsay," added Bonifan. "She will be there in all her splendor."

One thing Bonifan did not know was of a certain scene that had occurred twelve years before on a blue and gold June afternoon in the Bois de Boulogne.

On the night of the prime minister's dinner in honor of the new American ambassador and ambassadress, Bonifan was made proud of Lenore's readiness and grace five minutes after she entered the splendid salon. She walked straight up to the Vicomtesse D'Auriac, who was as stately and graceful in her seventies as in her thirties, and greeted her with that graceful courtesy to the old which is so much admired in France.

Especially was this admired by the minister of war, General Lestocq, bachelor, soldier, and all around good fellow, with an eye for beauty. As the Vicomtesse D'Auriac and the new ambassadress met, each recalled their last meeting. One of its consequences was

that Lenore was American ambassadress to France.

Then began one of those strange feminine duels which are fought with gentle words and soft smiles, but in which no quarter is asked or given.

"I remember you with much pleasure, Madame D'Auriac," said Lenore. And then she added, with soft, smiling sarcasm: "And gratitude."

"You have reason to be grateful to me," immediately responded Madame D'Auriac, with her up-guard ready. "Your position as an ambassadress is indeed splendid, and especially in Paris, where your country is so much admired."

The older woman's frank acknowledgment made Lenore smile. After all, she could not deny that Madame D'Auriac had been essentially in the right. Then Madame D'Auriac followed up her advantage by saying:

"I hear you have three beautiful boys."

"Yes," answered Lenore, "I am a very proud, if not a very wise, mother."

"I am glad you have so many children," replied Madame D'Auriac. "It is very difficult to bring up an only child. Perhaps you may remember my son. He is now a commandant, and is happily married."

Then, having settled their differences, as it were, there was a sudden upspringing of good will between the two women, and Lenore said:

"I cannot, of course, pay first calls, but if you will do me the honor of coming to see me, I shall have the greatest pleasure in returning your visit at once."

"Thank you. I live directly opposite your embassy, and I will come very soon," replied Madame D'Auriac. And then the older and the younger woman, whose quiet conversation had appeared to the onlookers as so conventional, moved apart.

General Lestocq thought himself in luck when he found himself seated on Mrs. Lyndhurst's right. They became friends at the first glance. Lenore was charmed with Lestocq's gay, military manners, his sound good sense under his

sharp repartee, his delightful homage to her.

Going home in the carriage, and talking over the dinner with her husband, Lenore told Lyndhurst of the passage at arms between herself and Madame D'Auriac.

"But what a friend she proved to me!" she said.

"And to me," replied Lyndhurst, drawing his wife to his heart.

Then began for Lenore the splendid life of an ambassadress, who was both popular and admired. Mrs. Lyndhurst immediately became the fashion.

The first night the Lyndhursts went to the opera, General Lestocq joined them as they mounted the grand staircase. Coming down was a military-looking man, black-eyed and slender, but worn looking and haggard, who looked hard at Mrs. Lyndhurst and bowed. Then he bowed to General Lestocq, who stopped, surveyed him coolly, and cut him dead. In their box afterward, when General Lestocq was gone, Lenore asked:

"Who was that man that General Lestocq cut so cruelly?"

"It was D'Auriac," replied Lyndhurst briefly.

"I had forgotten how he looked," said Lenore, after a pause.

The next morning all Paris was convulsed with the charges against D'Auriac, and in a week he was a prisoner before a court-martial. Bonifan, who knew how to keep his own counsel, also knew what to tell his chief.

"D'Auriac is a guilty man," he said to Lyndhurst and Lenore, sitting in Lenore's little boudoir. "The code book contained the secrets of the defenses of Paris. Everything must be done over again, changed, and the time and the money it will cost— Good God! No wonder the French people are frantic."

Lyndhurst glanced at his wife. She sat, still and abstracted, and then rose and went to the window and looked upon the vast old D'Auriac mansion opposite.

"I am thinking about his mother," she said presently. "She is a brave lady.

After one has sons, one begins to understand all mothers. Madame D'Auriac would rather see her son dead than disgraced. That is the way mothers feel."

Madame D'Auriac proved herself all that Lenore had said, for during the long agony of Victor D'Auriac's court-martial his mother showed an unflinching soul. All her accustomed places saw her, and saw her calm and courageous.

"I shall act as becomes the mother of an innocent man," she said, and was as good as her word.

But as the court-martial proceeded, nobody believed that Victor D'Auriac was an innocent man. The testimony grew ever blacker.

At last the court-martial began its secret deliberations. When this had lasted four days, it became known, by some strange psychic force, that the verdict would be announced the next morning, when the court met at ten o'clock. On the night before that fateful day a great dinner was to be given by General Lestocq in honor of the American ambassador and ambassadress.

Among Lenore's other qualifications as an ambassadress was an admirable punctuality. She was sitting in her boudoir, and was already dressed in a shimmering, silvery gown, twenty-five minutes in advance of the time the carriage was ordered.

Suddenly the door opened, and Madame D'Auriac entered. Lenore rose, and before she could speak Madame D'Auriac advanced and took from the folds of her long, black mantle a small, flat book.

"Here," she said, "is the code book. It has never been read, or even opened, as the experts can show. I know that you are going to the war minister's to dinner to-night. I wish you to take this with you—you will be the most welcome guest that ever crossed General Lestocq's threshold. For the return of this book I wish you to ask that General Lestocq defer for two hours the announcing the verdict of the court-martial on my son—only two hours. It

is expected the public announcement will be made at ten o'clock to-morrow morning. I want it delayed until twelve. That is not much to ask."

"But," cried Lenore, "my husband's position as ambassador. I can't—I can't ask a favor of a cabinet minister. Such a thing is unknown."

Madame D'Auriac smiled slightly.

"I knew ambassadors and ambassadors before you were born. I know exactly what they can and cannot do—but this is more than a matter of life and death—it is a matter of honor—a soldier's honor. Do you know what is done to an officer who has betrayed the secrets of his country? The troops are paraded in a hollow square. The officer is brought out and is marched around as a felon so that every soldier—thousands and thousands of them—will always know his face as the face of a traitor. He is then led to the middle of the square, his epaulets are torn from his shoulders, his sword is broken across his knee—"

As Madame D'Auriac spoke, she became deeply agitated; it was as if she saw the awful tragedy enacted before her. Lenore trembled as she listened.

"It is much worse than seeing a man guillotined," continued Madame D'Auriac, in a voice hardly to be recognized as her own clear and silvery tones. "Any mother would rather see her son dead in his coffin, his sword and epaulets upon it, than that."

At that moment three unexpected advocates for Madame D'Auriac appeared. The door leading into Lyndhurst's study burst open, and Lenore's three little lads came trooping in to see their mother in her shining evening gown, and to kiss her good night. They were well-mannered small creatures, and, seeing an elderly lady, bowed to her first. All three clasped Lenore in their arms at once. Lenore kissed them with a new passion, and sent them quickly away. Suddenly the mother's heart in her surrendered.

"I will do what you ask," she cried, "but I must tell my husband."

"Certainly," replied Madame D'Auriac, placing the book in Lenore's hand.

"If your husband knows his business as an ambassador he will thank you the rest of his life for what you are about to do."

Then the two women, looking into each other's eyes, remembered another interview, twelve years back, in which Madame D'Auriac had been a suppliant.

"Do you recollect," she asked, with the pale ghost of a smile, "that I once asked you not to marry my son, this son for whom I now beseech you?"

The remembrance of the great lady, calm and commanding, and this sad specter, touched Lenore's heart. She burst into a passion of tears, covering her face with her hands. When she recovered herself a little, Madame D'Auriac was gone. Lenore's word given, there was no time to lose.

She picked up from a chair a long, white evening cloak, and threw it over her bare shoulders, wholly concealing the book, and ran to her husband's dressing room and knocked.

"Come in," called out Lyndhurst, getting into his coat.

"We must go at once to General Lestocq's," said Lenore, with pale lips. "I will tell you all in the carriage."

"We shall be twenty minutes early," answered Lyndhurst, looking at his watch.

"So much the better. If the carriage has not come, we must go in a cab."

Lyndhurst had learned confidence in his wife's judgment. Without another word, he followed her as she went rapidly down the wide staircase, clasping something tightly under her cloak. But the carriage had come; and when Lenore quickly and tremulously told Lyndhurst what had just happened, Lyndhurst shouted to the coachman:

"Faster! Faster!"

When word was brought to General Lestocq that the American ambassador wished to see him privately, he ran downstairs—ambassadors cannot be kept waiting.

The other guests were, however. The drawing room was filled ten minutes before either the host or the guests of honor appeared. Lyndhurst frankly laid the blame on his coachman. Gen-

eral Lestocq sent the company off in a gale of laughter by describing the prime minister holding him at the telephone to discuss an uprising in Montenegro, while the chef was sending frantic messages about the fish getting overdone.

The dinner was very gay, with an undercurrent of excitement; all were thinking, although no one spoke, of what might befall on the coming morning. The Lyndhursts were the first to leave.

General Lestocq himself escorted them down the grand staircase, and as he put Lenore in the carriage kissed her hand.

"You are a Heaven-sent ambassador," he cried.

As the carriage door closed, Lyndhurst took his wife's hand.

"So say I," he said, "next to marrying me, this is the greatest service you ever did me."

At ten o'clock the next morning Lenore and Lyndhurst were standing together at the window of Lenore's boudoir, watching, in the dull and misty light, the huge old D'Auriac mansion opposite. As they watched, the door behind them opened with a slight noise. Lenore turned, and saw Madame D'Auriac. She was dressed in deep mourning, with a long black veil thrown back from her pale, beautiful old face.

"I have come to thank you," she said. "The verdict of the court-martial will never be published now. At half-past nine my son shot himself. He is now dead, thank God! They do not publish the sentences of dead men. Now my son will be buried in his uniform with his sword and epaulettes on his coffin. For this I thank you."

Madame D'Auriac walked out before Lyndhurst could open the door for her. The apparition was so sudden and so brief that Lyndhurst and Lenore looked at each other, stunned by Madame D'Auriac's tragic looks and words. From the street below suddenly came the shrill shriek of a news vender:

"Suicide of the Vicomte D'Auriac!"

Lenore turned to Lyndhurst, and laid her hand on his arm.

"D'Auriac was never anything to me," she cried, in a thrilling voice, "but his mother taught me some things all mothers should know—that a son is better dead than dishonored. People say that—men and women—but at this moment I know it and feel it."

"All love means honor," answered Lyndhurst.

"I know that, too," replied Lenore. "I could not have been your wife for twelve years without knowing so much."

Lyndhurst caught her to his breast. It was the most rapturous moment in their lives.



UNIVERSALISM

WE sat in the moonlight—my lady and I—
And looked at the clouds that went scurrying by.

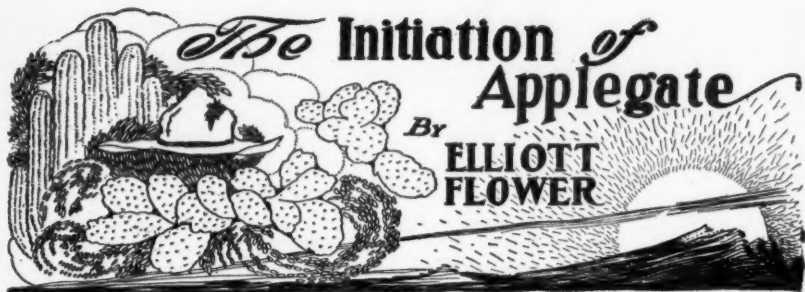
At our feet spilled the waves of a turbulent sea,
"As eternal as love," said my lady to me.

"As eternal as *our* love," I whispered. "It's true
No one else in the universe loves as we do."

And perhaps ev'ry pair up in Venus or Mars
Thought that moment of lovers in neighboring stars.

Thought that moment, and cared no whit more than we two,
For I know that I lied, and I know that she knew.

CHANNING POLLOCK.



WE had reached Red Rock, and there we decided to linger for a few days. There was no particular reason for this, beyond the fact that Red Rock, nestling in the foothills, with the mountains on one side and the prairie on the other, was as typical a Western town as you are likely to find in these degenerate days, and Applegate thought he might as well begin his investigation there as anywhere.

Here let me pause to introduce Applegate. He was English—very English—so English that it was painful—but he was a good fellow in his way, with plenty of “sand.” I did not think so when I first met him, but he proved it later. My first impression was that he really ought to sport a monocle. I remember I was disappointed when I found that he did not. With his accent, his clothes, his languid air, and his point of view, a monocle seemed natural if not absolutely necessary. But he drew the line at that. Therein he was wrong. It would have made him the typical Englishman of the American humorists.

Applegate’s full name, if you happened to have time to say it all, was Charles Robert Everleigh Ainsworth Applegate. They seem to be generous with names across the water, and, in his case, they seemed to be generous with letters of introduction, as well. The old man was greatly impressed—not by Applegate, but by the letters. Our house has foreign connections that are of great value to us, and I gathered

that most of these connections had made an earnest appeal to the old man to do everything possible to assist Applegate in the accomplishment of his purpose. The fact that Applegate was decidedly hazy as to his purpose, made such assistance rather difficult, however.

So the old man sent for me, introduced me, and turned the problem over to me. I remember the conversation distinctly.

“Mr. Applegate,” the old man explained, “is thinking of settling somewhere in the West.”

Applegate nodded indolently. “But the gov’nor thought of it first,” he said.

“He is over here to stay,” pursued the old man.

“That’s what the gov’nor thinks,” remarked Applegate.

“He has some money to invest,” the old man went on, “but he wants to look around a bit before deciding what to do.”

“Quite a bit,” yawned Applegate.

“He thinks that a young man with some money has better opportunities here, especially in the West, than he has in England.”

“Wrong, old chap,” corrected Applegate; “that’s what the gov’nor thinks. I never thought about it at all.”

“Anyhow,” persisted the old man, “we are asked to do what we can for him, and we’re glad to do it. I want you, Holton, to go with him wherever he wants to go, assist him in any way that you can, and give him the benefit of your advice. He is naturally unfamiliar with conditions over here, and I

look to you to see that he doesn't buy any gold bricks."

"But I'd rawther like to have a gold brick," objected Applegate.

The old man was having difficulty in concealing his contempt, but he went on:

"An interest in a good ranch——"

"Oh, I say, now," interrupted Applegate, "don't be so devilish hasty. I cawn't say what I'll want. I fawncy I may go in for raising buffalo, you know. It would be rawther novel and interesting."

"It would," agreed the old man.

"I don't fawncy mines," Applegate continued. "I wouldn't mind the gold, you know, but it must be dirty work."

"It is," agreed the old man.

"And being valet to a lot of bally caws don't appeal to me at all," Applegate went on. "But you cawn't tell. I might go in for mines. You never cawn tell. I'd feel like a silly ass pitching hay, but I might try it. Cawn't say what may be best until I see it all, you know. So I'll look about a bit. In six months or a year——"

"Six months or a year!" exclaimed the old man, and I could see he was figuring my salary and expenses for that time. "That's a pretty long stretch."

"Of no consequence, none at all," returned Applegate. "I'd rawther like to put it on the guv'nor, you know."

"Oh, well, go as far as you like," said the old man resignedly; and then, as we were leaving the room, he called me back. "This looks like a life job for you, Holton," he grumbled. "If that fellow can make up his mind to anything, I miss my guess. But it can't be helped. We've got to do it as a matter of business policy. Go with him, and do your best to locate him somewhere soon."

Of course, the old man forgot to take my own interest in the matter into consideration, or perhaps he thought Applegate so impossible that I'd welcome an early parting. But I found Applegate quite possible, even entertaining, when I had become accustomed to his peculiarities. And traveling at the expense of the house with a good com-

panion is infinitely preferable to grubbing in an office.

I can say truthfully that I did nothing to discourage or delay Applegate in his quest, but if you ask me if I sat up nights trying to persuade him to locate somewhere immediately, why—well, that is another story. However, I am merely explaining how we happened to be at Red Rock when Bill Dart, in the language of that town, "got his."

Applegate, with delightful candor, took everybody into his confidence in the matter of his mission, and it was not long before various people were offering him everything from ranches to mines. I learned later that some of them, in their enthusiasm, tried to sell him property that they did not own. Indeed, I have reason to believe that a few offered to transfer to him for a cash consideration all their right, title, and interest in property that did not exist.

But Applegate was in no hurry.

"D'ye know," he said on one occasion, "I cawn't help thinking sometimes that the guv'nor is just trying to ship me away. He talks about the outdoor life and all that bally rot, but I fawncy he'd rawther like to have the ocean between us."

"Can you blame him?" asked one of the listeners.

"No, old chap, I cawn't—really, I cawn't," replied Applegate, with the utmost sincerity. "I'm no use to him over there, you know, and I fawncy it's cheaper to buy a rawrch, or a mine, or something than it is to keep fixing me up at the club. We belong to the same club, you know, so it's rawther vexing to the guv'nor when I'm posted. But I don't like the idea. It makes me want to put it on the guv'nor by going back."

"Are there any more at home like you?" some one asked.

"Oh, not at all," answered Applegate, still serious. "Gerald, my brother, is so beastly good and clever that it's painful—quite painful, I assure you—and my sisters make a bit of a jest of me—good-humored, you know—for being such a useless chap. Oh, no, there aren't any more at home like me."

This denseness and ingenuous candor, combined with his apparel and accent, and the fact that he had money, made him an interesting and privileged character almost immediately. So I was not greatly surprised when I saw him coming down the street with a pretty girl the day after our arrival.

I was sitting in front of Hogan's Palace, that being the inappropriate name given to a little frame hotel, and I had the companionship of Jim Tracy, one of the few residents who was not trying to sell something to Applegate. I noted that Tracy puckered his lips and frowned, but he said nothing.

As they reached the hotel, Applegate lifted his hat politely, made some conventional remark, and left the girl. At the same moment, a little, wiry, bronzed fellow, who was sitting next to Tracy, jumped up with an exclamation of pleased surprise, and rushed after the girl. We saw him speak to her, and the next moment he was enthusiastically shaking both her hands.

I didn't blame him. She was a mighty pretty girl, with large, rather wistful eyes that seemed to appeal for protection in some way, and I should have welcomed the opportunity to shake both hands of any girl as pretty as she was and as glad to see me as she was to see him. I should also have continued on down the street with her, as he did.

But Tracy shook his head solemnly.

"He's courtin' trouble," Tracy remarked, "and," he added, turning to Applegate, "so was you."

"Oh, come now, old chap," Applegate objected, "she don't look dangerous."

"She ain't," returned Tracy, "but Bill Dart is, an' she's Bill's girl."

We remembered Bill. He had sauntered into Hogan's Palace the night before. He was a big brute of a man, domineering, ugly, scowling most of the time, and it seemed a sacrilege to mention him in the same breath with the girl who had just passed. But we also remembered—at least I did—that he had been treated with unusual deference.

"Bill's, is she?" reflected Applegate.

"Fawncy, now! I cawn't believe it, and—aw—who says so?"

"Bill does," replied Tracy. "Bill says it loud an' plenty, an' what Bill says goes."

"Does it, now?" remarked Applegate. "D'ye know, I'd rawther want to hear what the girl says."

"She don't open her head," explained Tracy, "but she's sure nice to Bill. There's some that might cut in an' take chances with Bill if she give the signal, but she don't. Bill does, though. He makes signals a-plenty, an' his signals is plain 'Keep Off the Grass,' which everybody, knowin' Bill, does. She come here a maverick, an' Bill got his brand on her first."

This was enough to satisfy me, but Applegate wanted to know more about Bill, and Tracy was quite willing to gratify his curiosity.

Thus we learned that Bill Dart was one of the vanishing race of bad men. He had none of the chivalry credited to at least some of the men of his class in the earlier days, and he was considered peculiarly dangerous because of his methods. There was nothing in his code of ethics that required him to give anybody "an even chance," but the influence of the law and public opinion, even in Red Rock, had become so dominant that the earlier "free-and-easy" methods of homicide were now extremely unwise, not to say dangerous. People had become so very particular and critical that it was necessary to show some justification for the taking of human life.

Dart, however, was so quick and sure with his gun that he could draw and shoot while his opponent was making the first motion to that end. And he was always ready. It followed naturally that any man, unless equally expert and unscrupulous, was as much at his mercy as he would be if shot without warning.

Miss Ella Golden, the girl I had seen with Applegate, could have ended Bill's reign, but she did not. He had been among the first to meet her when she came to Red Rock to take charge of the school, and he had promptly "appro-

priated" her. If she objected to this she did not show it, and that was what made the situation difficult.

The least intimation from her that his attentions were unwelcome would have brought every man in town to her rescue, whatever risk there might be, but there was a natural disinclination to incur the displeasure of Bill in a cause that did not even promise the gratitude of the object of such championship. If she had the bad taste to like him, why, that settled it.

"Women is queer," concluded Tracy. "The littlest an' gentlest of 'em sometimes cuddles up to a brute that ain't got a thing but a mean streak as wide as himself."

"But he needs taming, don't you think?" suggested Applegate.

"He sure does," returned Tracy. "Want to tackle the job?"

Applegate shook his head doubtfully. "I don't see why I should, you know," he said, "but I'd try it if she awksed me. I'm quite partial to the ladies."

"Same with the rest of us," declared Tracy.

"And I don't see why I should let any bally bully keep me away from one of them," added Applegate, with unexpected spirit. "It makes me quite vexed, I assure you."

"Here! Back up!" exclaimed Tracy. "Don't go to mixin' up in this. Your pa don't want you shipped home in a box."

"It might be a bit of a relief to him, old chap," returned Applegate quite seriously.

Applegate then added, warming somewhat to his subject, that attempted dictation of any sort always annoyed him, that Bill's record showed him to be a cowardly brute, and that he—Applegate—would not be intimidated. He had had some experience with bullies, and he would not let one of them say what he should or should not do in any circumstances whatsoever.

He had not been particularly interested in Miss Golden before, but he was now anxious to see more of her, and, if possible, find out whether this Bill Dart monopoly met with her en-

tire approval. If so, there was nothing more to be said; if not, Bill was entitled to no consideration at all.

It was a most surprising declaration for one of his usual placidity, and it gave me a new conception of the man. He had nerve, beyond doubt, and I suddenly realized that in the right circumstances this big, indolent Englishman would be physically dangerous. But not to a man who could and would act with the celerity and ruthlessness of a cat on a mouse hunt. The odds would be all against him in an encounter with unscrupulous Bill Dart.

I called him aside and mentioned this somewhat important fact, but he did not seem to be impressed. He assured me, however, that he had no thought of seeking an encounter with Bill, that he would be much gratified if he never saw Bill again, but that he did not see that he was called upon to avoid Miss Golden simply because Bill desired it. Indeed, Bill's attitude rather inclined him to seek Miss Golden's company. He would like to get a little further insight into the matter, anyway. Stubborn he was, but almost apologetic in his stubbornness, as if he disliked to displease me.

Our argument was interrupted by the gentle admonition: "Don't cut in, old man."

The man who had joined the girl as she passed the hotel had returned, and resumed his seat near Tracy. He could not have heard all that we said, but he must have caught scraps of the conversation.

"You're all right, Reginald," he went on, addressin'; Applegate, "but this is my game."

"My name," corrected Applegate, "is Charles Robert Everleigh Ainsworth Applegate."

"All right, Alphabet," returned the little man breezily, "you're the right sort—I can see that easy—but pry loose."

"Beg pahdon!" said Applegate, bewildered.

"Leave this Bill party to me," advised the stranger.

"Know him?" interrupted Tracy.

"I've heard of him."

"You don't act like you'd heard much," remarked Tracy.

"I've heard enough," was the reply.

"Considered a bad man, ain't he?"

"Yes."

"Likes to have a shade the best of it, don't he?"

"Two shades."

"Suits me. You might mention to him that I'm from Cœur d'Alene."

"What's that, old chap?" asked Applegate.

"It's a place where they breed dynamiters," replied the stranger.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Applegate. "I rawther think I've heard of it."

"I rather think you have," returned the stranger. "Nothing doing there lately, but we still know how."

"Name?" suggested Tracy.

"Ned Hardy."

"Don't recall it," said Tracy.

"There's lots you don't know," returned Hardy.

"Seein' it's none of my business at all," remarked Tracy, "I won't do no more than say you better be sure of your ground. This girl don't seem to want anybody to break in."

"No?"

"Acts like she don't. There's others would take chances if she flashed the signal. Jest a word of friendly warnin' to a stranger, you know. That's all."

Tracy got up, and sauntered away.

I was more than ever satisfied that this was a good mess to keep out of; but Applegate, as usual, was not satisfied.

"I say, old chap," he remarked, "I don't see why you'd be taking this away from me. I was first, you know."

"Think so?" said Hardy.

"Why—er—yes, I rawther thought so," replied Applegate, surprised.

Hardy considered this for a few minutes before replying. "I like you, Alphabet," he said at last, "even if you have got an accent that would kill a dog. You size up right. Come with me—your and your friend."

Puzzled and curious, we followed him down the street to the schoolhouse, where we found the girl busily engaged in correcting lesson papers.

"Here's a good friend of yours, Ella," Hardy announced in his breezy way, indicating Applegate.

"I met him a little while ago," she replied, with a welcoming smile. "Tim White introduced us at the post office."

Hardy presented me, and then reverted to his original statement.

"But you don't know how good a friend he is," he explained. "He wanted to go up against Bill Dart for you."

"Oh, Ned," she cried, a great fear reflected in her eyes, "I hope there isn't going to be any trouble."

"None at all," he answered. "Why, Bill's out of town; you told me that yourself. But I thought you'd want to thank Mr. Alphabet. He's the right sort. He was pretty near ready to fight me for a chance to fight for you."

"Oh, now, old chap!" reproached Applegate.

"But I don't want any fighting at all, Ned," pleaded the girl. "Can't you see I've endured this horrible man just to prevent it?"

"There's people that say you like him," remarked Hardy.

Her eyes flashed indignant denial. "I hate him, despise him, but—I'm afraid of him!" she said.

"Go on," urged Hardy. "I want Alphabet to have the whole story."

Apparently she needed little encouragement to unburden her mind of all that had been so long repressed, and she went on with an erratic vehemence that had an occasional note of hysteria in it.

"I'm afraid—not so much for myself as for others," she said. "Oh, he's threatened me, too, but his threats are mostly for those who come near me. Other men must stay away! I must keep them away! My friendship is a peril! Imagine the horrible anxiety, the dread. No, you can't. Don't try. It's beyond expression. You must feel it yourself to have any conception of it."

"I didn't know the kind of a man he is when I first met him, and I was cordial—just as I was to others. But I've heard all about him since, and I know now he's capable of all he threatens."

I know it, and others show it. Haven't I seen how they fear him? Do you suppose I didn't notice Tim White's frantic signals when Mr. Applegate started away with me? And I knew," she added dismally, "that only a stranger would take such a risk."

"Oh, come, now," interrupted Applegate, "I'd have been the more ready to do it if I had known it all. Quite so, I assure you."

There could be no doubt of his earnestness, and she gave him a grateful, if rather pathetic, little smile; but her recognition of his sympathetic interest was confined to that, and, perhaps, a readiness to speak even more freely.

"I was both glad and fearful," she pursued, addressing us all. "I felt that I ought to warn him! Think of the humiliation of that! But I was hungry—yes, actually hungry—for a little companionship, a little friendship, a little attention from a man who didn't act as if a curse lay on me, who didn't seem to be in a fever to get away, who, even because of ignorance, was not afraid to be nice to me! You don't know—you can't imagine—how I longed for this! You don't know—you can't imagine—how horrible it has all been! And I reasoned that Mr. Applegate would be gone by the time the brute returned."

"D'ye know," remarked Applegate, as imperturbably placid as ever, "I rawther think I'll remain. It may relieve the guv'nor of a great problem."

"Oh, no, you mustn't!" cried Miss Golden.

"No, you mustn't!" echoed Hardy. "Miss Golden will tell you that I've got the 'edge' on you, if anything is to come off."

"But I don't want either of you to stay," she urged appealingly. "Please, please, you mustn't!"

"Tell him, anyhow, Ella," insisted Hardy.

There really was no need of saying anything. Her eyes, as she turned them on Hardy, were a sufficient explanation of the situation. It was unquestionably his right to act as her champion, so far as she would permit any one to do so, and even Applegate realized this.

"All right, old chap," said Applegate before the girl could speak. "I don't have to have it printed out for me, you know, but I'm rawther sorry to be out of it."

Then, quite ceremoniously, he bowed to the girl, and the girl blushed.

We left Hardy with her, but he overtook us before we reached the hotel. He seemed to think that we were entitled to some explanation, although we asked no questions, and presently, when we were again in the chairs we had recently vacated, he began to talk.

"I want to take Ella home with me," he remarked abruptly, "but she is too conscientious to desert her school in the middle of a term; so I guess I'll have to hang on here for a while."

"How about Bill Dart?" I asked.

"That's just it," he returned. "I've got to straighten that little affair out before I can leave her. Then I can come back for her when she's ready."

He was silent for a moment, and when he spoke again it was half musingly, as if he were talking to himself rather than to us.

"That school business is always making trouble," he reflected. "I never wanted her to go into it. There was no reason why she should that I could see, but she had some silly notion of independence. We split on that two years ago. I said she could choose between me and a school, and she resented my dictation. She wasn't quite ready to marry me then." A faint, reminiscent smile flickered over his face. "She is now. I guess we both found we'd made a mistake. It took me a year to be sure of it, but I've been hunting for her ever since. I don't know how long it took her, but she's ready now, only she insists upon finishing the term here. Well, there's no objection to that after I get this Bill person properly fixed."

We didn't ask how Bill was to be "fixed." For my part, I remembered what Hardy had said about Cœur d'Alene, and it occurred to me that he might consider any probing after details as an impertinence. Besides, my idea was to get away from Red Rock before the explosion took place, for I

recalled that the innocent bystander was usually the one who suffered.

But Applegate had different views.

"Why, old chap," he objected, "it promises such a jolly row, don't you see? We must stay for it—really we must."

It certainly did promise a jolly row. How Hardy calmed the girl's fears I do not know, but he spent every possible moment in her company, and most of the population spent the time discussing what was likely to happen when Bill returned. The majority favored Bill—not his cause or himself, but his chances in any encounter that might take place.

A few there were, however, who were not so sure of this. Hardy was a good deal of a mystery, and they recalled what he had said about *Cœur d'Alene*. His quiet air of self-confidence commanded respect and even deference. He might be just the man for the task he had apparently assumed. At any rate, Bill and Bill's reputation seemed to have no terrors for him, although he was fully and frequently advised as to Bill's prowess and tactics.

"Oh, well," he remarked on one occasion, "some of these quick-gun men were blown up at *Cœur d'Alene*."

All in all, it seemed possible that Hardy might know what he was doing.

Then Bill Dart returned. He was promptly advised of the situation, of course, and those who informed him did not overlook the veiled but significant references to *Cœur d'Alene*. It occurred to me that this might lead him to shoot with even less warning than usual, but such a possibility did not seem to disturb Hardy.

We were sitting in front of Hogan's Palace when word was brought to us that Bill was coming up the street by easy stages, each saloon on the way being a station that required a full stop. He was also making occasional inquiries as to the man who didn't know enough to keep away from "Bill's girl."

All eyes turned naturally to Hardy, who was smoking placidly.

"It's sure up to you now," remarked Tracy.

Hardy nodded, rose, threw away his cigar, and sauntered into the hotel.

"I'll be back," he said as he disappeared.

There were some who doubted this. It sometimes happened that a man's nerve deserted him at the crucial moment, and the hotel, of course, had a back door.

"It don't stand to reason that he's goin' for his gun," remarked one of them, "for a man that was expectin' a call from Bill wouldn't never be without one."

"But, old chap," objected Applegate, "he took this away from me, you know, and why would he do that if he didn't want it himself?"

The arrival of Bill himself, with the usual crowd that prospective trouble always gathers, prevented further discussion. Apparently some of those accompanying him had noted from afar that Hardy was not with us and had so advised Bill, for he passed into the bar-room without giving us more than a quick glance.

The loungers, to a man, rose and followed. I was content to remain where I was, but Applegate was on his feet with the rest of them.

I mildly intimated that any place where Bill was not seemed to me preferable just then to any place where he was, as I was unalterably opposed to enacting the rôle of innocent bystander.

"But it will be such a jolly row, old chap," urged Applegate. "I couldn't miss it, you know."

So I went along.

Bill was standing at the bar, seeking information from the bartender. He was, he confided, curious as to the whereabouts of the man who had taken advantage of his absence to be unduly attentive to his girl. He was of the opinion that this man would have to leave town in haste or else be shipped away in a box.

Incidentally he intimated that he intended to take no chance with him, certain things having come to his ears that he construed as threats. No one was called upon to take chances in such circumstances.

The fact that this was said rather quietly, without bluster, increased my respect for Bill. He was, I decided, quite as dangerous as he had been pictured, and I did not consider his immediate vicinity a choice location for a life-loving man. Nor, for that matter, did I regard the door leading to the hotel office as an especially attractive spot. If Hardy appeared there, as was probable, it would be decidedly in the danger zone.

Others, with the exception of two or three who were drinking with Bill, seemed to share my view. There was an air of nervous apprehension, and a tenseness that inclined one to speak in whispers. We shifted and shuffled uneasily—waiting.

"Quite like a play, don't you think?" remarked Applegate.

It was like a play, and it had the climax of a play. Bill was just raising his glass when a quiet voice queried:

"Were you looking for me?"

Hardy was advancing toward Bill—unexcitedly, rather leisurely, but unfalteringly. He had appeared just where I had expected him to appear, and yet, somehow, I had not seen him until he spoke. I noted then that his hands were hanging loosely at his sides, but one of them gripped some round object that I could not distinguish.

I thought, in that moment, of what he had said about *Cœur d'Alene*. It seemed to have a sudden terrible significance. I imagine some such thought occurred to Bill, too, for he seemed to go suddenly white as his eyes rested momentarily on that partly closed hand.

I have only a confused impression of what happened immediately thereafter. It seemed to me that Bill dropped his glass, reached for his gun, drew it, and fired, all with one motion. So quickly was it done that the report of the gun was almost simultaneous with the crash of the glass on the floor.

But, even so, he was not quick enough. The bullet bored a hole in the ceiling, as we afterward discovered, and Bill crumpled up and dropped to the floor even as his gun was sending its

aimless bullet upward. There he lay moaning, his face and shirt dyed red.

Applegate was the first man to reach Hardy. Applegate seemed to come out of his usual lethargy in most surprising fashion, and he demonstrated that he was no mean antagonist. He had Hardy pinioned before any one else could move.

"Cawn't have it, old chap!" he exclaimed. "Not my idea of fighting, you know; not at all."

Several others seemed to take the same view. They might have no love for Bill, but this was not a form of fighting that they recognized, and they did not hesitate to say so. There were murmurings that closely resembled threats. There was also a disposition to search Hardy for other deadly missiles. But Hardy made vigorous objection to this.

"Aw, go pick him up," he advised, "and see what's happened to him."

But there was no need. Bill was still moaning and groaning, but those leaning over him were laughing.

"He got me," moaned Bill weakly. "I'm a goner! Tell the little school-ma'am—"

Tracy suddenly jerked him to his feet.

"We'll tell her, all right," declared Tracy. "We'll tell her he got you with a good ripe tomato, and we got your size. The only thing we're sore on is that we let you have the swing we did. But it's sure finished now. Git!"

Tracy applied a boot where it would have the most immediate effect, and Bill shot into the street. Then he kept going, a yelping, hilarious crowd urging him to greater speed with whatever missiles were within reach.

As he disappeared from view, Applegate turned to Hardy.

"I rawther think the girl is yours, old chap," he said; "but, d'ye know, I cawn't believe they do it that way at *Cœur d'Alene*."

"Can't say," returned Hardy carelessly. "I was never there."

"What! Then why—"

"For the moral effect," interrupted Hardy. "It prepared him."

SHADOWS



BY

JANE W. GUTHRIE

THERE was no one about at the club but the three of us, Fanning, Kingdon, and myself, that stormy afternoon in winter, when Fanning told us his story, while we waited for some one to come in and make a fourth for us at bridge. No one, that is, but "The Shadow," sitting in his chosen chair by the window, a little distance away, and he really did not count. And Fanning's story was the unfinished tragedy of Natalie Meade and Gordon Grant.

"She was the loveliest thing that I ever saw," he asserted. "I can just recall her enchanting face, her starry eyes, her tall, slender figure, and her winning ways, the things that most impressed me once when I happened to be at Colonel Meade's place, down in Virginia. She had come home to make a visit to her father, and even then I wondered what trouble was hanging over her.

"The old colonel told me that she had had a lover, and was just about to become engaged to him, when his best friend, Gordon Grant, a naval officer, came home from a cruise and fell extravagantly in love with her. Naturally she was dazzled, for Grant was enough like a knight of romance to dazzle any one. A prince of good fellows, a splendidly set-up chap, he could sing like an angel, and play any musical instrument that was ever made. But, far more than Natalie, the old colonel was dazzled with the spectacular advantages of a son-in-law who was rich, a brilliant officer, and charming beside, since the old gentleman was, at that time, living principally on bluff and the remnants of funds

secured through mortgages; and the landsman lover, though comfortably off and with good prospects, was not rich at that time.

"The colonel told me quaintly enough," Fanning related, "that he had always intended his only child to go at a good figure—the colonel had once owned slaves—the better to redeem, he hoped, his wasted acres and impoverished bank account. Grant did straighten out the old man's affairs for him, only to find him again hopelessly muddled before he died, through inveterate gambling, so that Natalie had nothing of her own, and was absolutely dependent on her husband.

"But the landsman lover, who knew Grant better than any one else, insisted that Grant should tell both the old colonel and Natalie of his one great failing. He made himself companion of the bottle now and then, on land, never at sea or when on active duty. He loved the sea, and the sea was his salvation, he well knew, and his occasional outbreaks on land were always carefully covered up; but at these times he was a madman and murderous. No one could control him, with the exception of this one friend, who seemed to have a peculiar and calming influence over him. His man was always instructed to get him into a strait-jacket as soon as possible.

"And Grant did tell the old colonel, and the old colonel urged that he be allowed to tell Natalie; but Grant insisted that he would do it himself, and, finally, they settled the matter over a game of cards, and Colonel Meade saw to it on

this occasion that there was no chance about the matter, and that he was the instrument of fate. He even pointed out the table upon which the two of them had played with destiny and a woman's happiness, grinning and chuckling, and looking like an ancient gargoyle, as he confessed it.

"And he never told her. Natalie, her father knew, really cared far more for her landsman lover than for the man of the sea, but she married Gordon Grant, only to come to an awakening the day after the wedding. In terror, she sent for her former lover, who took Grant in hand and straightened him out; it was then that he made his friend promise that, whenever he was on shore duty, the friend would be at hand; for so well had the colonel arranged matters that Grant never really knew that Natalie had had a love affair with the other man.

"She followed him around the world for a number of years, I have been told; but a year ago, the final break came between her husband and herself in Yokohama, with a display of more than the usual fireworks. Afterward Grant went on a cruise; Natalie disappeared, where to no one seems to know, nor is there any one who seems to have heard of the guardian of the household that I can find. He conducted himself with such propriety and consideration for Mrs. Grant that I have been assured that he is a myth of the old colonel's, or the creation of a contempt for the truth.

"But," sighed Fanning, "I'd like to know what happened out there, and where Natalie Grant is at present, and who the other man was."

Fanning did not like to be baffled in that large interest in other people's affairs, commonly called curiosity. He sighed again, and, as if anxious to free his mind of the fret of the unrevealed, he turned to Kingdon.

"Go and get some one to play," he urged.

"No one about," yawned Kingdon, "no one but——"

He nodded his head toward The Shadow, sitting erect in his chair, gazing out upon that pageant of existence

which even in storm sweeps up and down the Avenue, hour after hour, an endless procession of humanity. It was Fanning who had first called Lawrence Copley "The Shadow," and now, in derision, half in joke, he said: "Well—why not?"

Neither young nor old, Copley could hardly be called middle-aged. A man of breeding, he bore about him the atmosphere of the great world. To his old associates, who had known him in former days, he was merely a quiet man who had traveled, was interested in intellectual pursuits, had written for the magazines and reviews, and having inherited a comfortable fortune at the death of his parents and only brother, all within a year or two, was in no active business. The old family home was still open; an old-fashioned brownstone house on a street given over now entirely almost to commerce. Some distant relatives were there and kept it for him, but he himself lived at the club.

On many days, those who observed him, if they ever thought it worth while to interest themselves in so passive a person, thought that he watched for some one to go by, relaxing after the passing into his usual characteristic indifference to the brilliant, restless, colorful world before him in which he denied himself a part.

That he should have consented to play with us that winter afternoon was only one of the many surprises of a long line, to which he treated us in outrageous first impressions. Yet, there he stood, with that detached air of his, a courteous, half-amused, tolerant air, waiting for Fanning to scramble into his manners, for me to put on the garment of gladness, while Kingdon stood by preening himself as one who has conquered a city.

"I am always ashamed," Kingdon said afterward, "of that first game. He came, when I had the cheek to ask him, like the courteous gentleman that he is, and, by the way, I have wondered if any one ever thought it worth while to be courteous to him or ask him to join them in anything before. I know

that we treated him as if he were the Greeks bearing gifts. Every one of us wondering if he could play, according him that cold, insolent, veiled scrutiny that withheld judgment, which we grant to those whose attitude to the established humdrums of life is unconventional."

But Copley paid no attention to the attitude of others. He had been asked to play, and he did it; and no man could be a mere looker-on in life who played so aggressive a game of bridge. No man could play the game of life badly who played bridge so well.

Life is a game at which from unseen sources The cards are shuffled and the hearts are dealt.

And Lawrence Copley, apparently, accepting what came to him in the dealing, used it to the very best of his knowledge. Indeed, all three of us realized then that the quiet manner, the unobtrusive absorption in his own affairs, masked a gentle kindness of feeling toward others, a deliberate aggressiveness, should the occasion call for it, coupled with a dash and flare of courage which we had never believed possible. And that concentration of his had probably developed a marvelous capacity for intuition. He seemed to know by instinct how to read other hands, and how to play his own.

He illustrated himself and his life as we came to know it, in a hand that he played that first evening. It called forth Fanning's unbounded admiration. Indeed, Fanning then and there attached himself to Copley and became almost his bodyguard, so devoted was he to him. Just so, we each and every one of us took him to our hearts, this simple, quiet gentleman of no pretensions, who never spoke of himself, but in whose blue-gray eyes there were flashes, now and then, of inspiration, that we had never noticed there before.

We came to know that just as he played that hand on that evening, so he played his game of life, ruffing the strong hand to establish his suit, leading a losing trump to secure a reëntry card for that suit.

He was dealer, with Kingdon for partner. Holding seven, three, two of hearts; ten, four of diamonds; ace, three of clubs; and ace, king, seven, six, five, three of spades, and a score of sixteen to nought in the dealer's favor, he passed the make to Fanning, who made it hearts.

With no hearts; king, knave, nine, eight, three, two of diamonds; king, eight, seven of clubs; queen, eight, four, two of spades, I led my fourth best diamond.

The dummy went down with ace, king, queen, knave, ten, eight, five of hearts; ace, seven, six, five of diamonds; deuce of clubs; and nine of spades.

Third hand held nine, six, four of hearts; queen of diamonds; queen, knave, ten, nine, six, five, four of clubs; and knave, ten of spades.

There was an air of quiet decisiveness, the faintest reflection of a smile upon his face, as Copley sat forward at my lead of diamonds and drew from the dummy hand the ace of diamonds to put upon my eight spot, following next with a lead of trumps, the ace. He refused to take another round in view of the losing diamonds, and began the effort to establish his spade suit by ruffing it out, leading his nine of spades toward the ace in his own hand, following it with the lead of the king, and then the three toward the dummy's ten spot of trumps, giving in return a club to the ace in his own hand, returning again the spade; now, however, he allowed the third hand to overtrump his eight with the nine, in order to get it out of the way and make good the seven in his own hand.

Third hand having nothing now in suit but clubs, led his queen to find dummy's knave of trumps; and now, from dummy, Copley led his five of trumps to the seven in his own hand which he had held as a reëntry card for his spades, his king and queen of trumps taking the last two tricks and scoring for him a little slam.

We urged him to make a constant fourth for us, and, smiling gently, in his characteristic manner, he agreed to

do so. Fanning gave a little feast in celebration of this at his own house, so did Kingdon, and I, of course, followed; so that we were not much surprised when Copley telephoned to the club one afternoon, and asked if we would play at the old family home that night.

Of course we went. Ushered in by an elderly servant, we were taken to a room on the second floor. A room that bespoke that ugly mid-century eruption of black walnut furniture of the most elaborate kind. There was a desk near the window, a "sofa," chairs, a bureau, with a bed in an alcove, all complete and exclamatory evidence of an inherited environment.

As we passed through the hall, dimly lighted as it was, I could see shrouded rooms through half-open doors, the specterlike visions of swathed mirrors and chandeliers and pictures, of wrapped and draped furniture. Memories of other days, other people. No wonder that Lawrence Copley had suggested shadows to Fanning, if he stayed any time in a house like this. Here were nothing but shadows.

The only evidence of what might suggest itself as personal taste, possibly, was a quaint card table standing in the centre of the room to which we were taken. An exquisite specimen of its era, this piece of old mahogany with its wax finish, its lyre-shaped pedestal, its curving claw legs tipped with shining brass, its folding leaves and rounded corners, from which drooped a carved acorn; and Copley stood beside it, with that charming, courteous smile of welcome about his lips; but his eyes, his brow, it seemed to me, looked drawn and anxious.

Slipping the folded leaves about, he drew from a concealed drawer his scores and cards for us to use, and from there arose, at the same time, the strangest, faint, yet pungent, old-fashioned odor, deliciously like a century-old rose potpourri.

I began to vision girandoles, and flickering wax candles, "the ladies of St. James' with satin on their back," as the proper accompaniment to any game

played upon this table; but Fanning, who had stood for a moment or two at the threshold of the room, startled, amazed, his long, narrow, pointed nose twitching like a hunting dog's, went forward slowly, his eyes almost popping out of his head.

"I never saw but one table like this," he said, in a queer, strained voice, that sounded as if it were far away, "and it belonged to Colonel Meade, of Virginia."

"This table belonged to Colonel Meade," said Copley quietly. "His daughter, Mrs. Grant, gave it away, and I bought it from the owner."

"His daughter, Mrs. Grant!"

We all stared at each other, at Copley, at the table. There before our eyes was the instrument of fate that had made Fanning's story; it stood before us the mute evidence of Fanning's mystery! Upon that table men had played with lives and destiny; with happiness and tragedy. And Copley—The Shadow—Copley must be "the other man."

Like a knell of alarm, I remembered that only a few days before I had noted in the naval news, in the evening paper, the arrival of Gordon Grant in town. I had meant to speak of it to Fanning, but I had forgotten it, and I had never connected Copley with that story Fanning told us that stormy afternoon at the club; which still must be a mystery to us all, since, as we knew, that quiet man there never would finish it out for us.

But where was Natalie Grant? And why had Copley asked us here on this night?

Never have I known him play as he did that evening. He seemed gifted with an almost uncanny alertness, and yet his attention was divided, I knew. He was apparently listening, with his mental ears, listening to the footsteps in the rooms overhead, a stealthy, hushed sound of some one coming and going, but very quietly.

I could feel my fingers tingle and my voice ready to stutter out the questions that I wanted to ask him, the questions that I knew were on the tips of all of our tongues, judging Fanning

and Kingdon by the way they played; and yet some prescience of events, something in Copley's manner sent the quick blood shivering through my veins, while all about us, on the scores and the cards, was that pungent, old-fashioned odor floating, like an envelope and scent of romance.

Suddenly Copley laid down his cards and stood up, starting toward the door, drawn by an altercation in the outer hall. We all rose from our chairs just as the door was flung open, to disclose a man, hatless, his hair tossed about, his face pallid as death; he was wild and haggard, with staring eyes. I knew at once that it was Gordon Grant; and I knew why Copley had asked us there that night. He had evidently heard Fanning tell that story that day, and was assured of our sympathy and comprehension, especially Fanning's, and with his knowledge of occurrences on the other side, he was taking no chances. I say I knew. I thought I knew, but I did not until he spoke, and then I realized that for himself he would never have brought us into a scene with Gordon Grant.

The man must have been superbly handsome; indeed, though a wreck, as complete as any that I ever saw, he was still a suggestion of what he had been, as he stood there swaying and demoniac, a sardonic sort of a smile upon his lips. He flung back the long coat he was wearing with a snap, and plunging his shaking hand again into his pockets, he showed himself in his shirt and trousers, his neck bare, for he had turned down the collar next his throat, the better, it seemed, to breathe. He had evidently been drinking heavily, and must have escaped guardianship. He drew one hand out of the pocket and moved it slowly toward his back, as he said, in a tense voice that he tried his best to control, a voice that carried a menace:

"I want my wife."

Copley had been walking toward him, Fanning slowly moving just behind Copley.

"Yes, I know." Copley had almost reached him; he spoke in a low, sooth-

ing voice, as one would speak to a sick child, a wonderful sort of moving voice, calm, controlled, but yet with a note of command. "I know," he agreed. "Natalie is here in this house. I gave it to my cousin who lives here so that your wife would feel free to come and stay with her. There was no place else for her, you know, Grant. I have never spoken to her since she came here, but I have seen to it that she was well looked after. You know that I would do that for you. But she is ill to-night, and threatened with pneumonia, and you cannot see her. To-morrow, perhaps."

Grant, however, did not listen; he threw his hand around quickly and sent a rock which he had evidently picked up on his way there full at Copley. But Fanning had anticipated him; he caught Copley and drew him out of the way, and the rock, hurtling with unsteady aim across the room, fell full upon the old card table and sent it over in a heap.

Gordon stared at it a moment indifferently, and then a gleam of intelligence, of arrested attention, swept across his face; he took a long, eager, steady stare at the overturned table, shrugged his shoulders sardonically, and chuckled sneeringly, almost unbelievably.

"The table," he said, "of blessed memory. So you got my wife's table into your possession. Oh, you pious sneak!"

"Grant"—the steel in Copley's voice rang now—"you're going to come in here and let me put you to bed."

He went forward and put his hand upon the demented man's shoulder.

Grant wavered a moment, as if obeying an old instinct, then he threw himself back resentfully, and said mutinously:

"I won't. I came here to kill you, and her, too, if I could find her. I tried to do it over there when she told me that she had never cared for me, and that she had always cared for you. I never understood before, but I do now." He drew with a swift slash a long, shining knife from down the line of

his trousers, ugly, murderous looking. "I've carried this half around the world to help me get you out of the way."

He laughed a low, stealthy, ragged sort of a laugh.

In an instant the scene became a horrible haze of happenings, a blur. It seemed to me that I heard a sharp, hoarse call to Copley. I know that Fanning struck the knife from the man's hand, as we all turned to see a tall woman standing in the dusk of the hall, just back of him.

"Natalie!" called Copley.

But she did not move. She stood there, a dressing gown thrown over her nightdress, her dark hair just tinged with gray, her face looking like carven marble, her starry eyes shining, and not the faintest shadow of fear or cowardice on her face; but with her head held high, she had deliberately attempted to divert her husband's attention to her, to save Copley. She did not see us nor take us into account. There were only the three of them in her world, to her, and she had evidently hastily left a sick bed to take her place in it.

We all tried to get to her, but Grant, like a flash, was before us, and caught

her about the throat before Copley could reach her. I know I groaned in agony, and I heard Kingdon's sob of anguish.

It was Fanning who freed her, Fanning and Copley. I believe Fanning broke or dislocated Grant's arm in order to free her.

It was Fanning who stayed there, and nursed Gordon Grant until he died. He had been more or less of a wreck for a year, they told us afterward. It was Copley who carried away from that house the frail, pitiful shadow of the only woman he had ever loved, and nursed her back to life and peace; and yet, though I saw them often together in their quiet happiness, I could never think of Natalie Meade or Lawrence Copley as anything but the shadows of a broken youth, about whom there clung the atmosphere of romance, like the odor that sweetened that quaint old card table—elusive, delicate, indescribably suggestive of memories.


Kingdon said that Copley was the finest illustration of friendship that he had ever known; but Fanning and I wondered what became of that broken table upon which two men had played a game with fate. We never knew.



THE LITTLE STEPS

THE days are little steps we take away
 From joy transcendent or from grief supreme;
 Slowly we go, yet surely, day and day,
 Until at last these seem
 (For all we would be faithful) vague and faint,
 As some receding, half-remembered dream.

The days are little steps that lead us on
 To newer love or sorrow. Though we guessed
 That certain goal beyond the farthest dawn,
 We may not haste nor rest
 Till at the house of Joy or Pain we stand,
 And one comes forth to greet his one night's guest.
 THEODOSIA GARRISON.



CINDERELLA'S BROTHER

by ANNA MCCLURE SHOLL



AM astonished, sir! I thought my son was a——"

"A Harvard student, pater; and, if my modesty permits me to add, not unpopular."

"If these bills mean anything, you spent most of your time in an automobile. When I went to college, I had an allowance over and above my expenses of one hundred dollars a year."

"Poor pater," his son remarked sympathetically, "what a narrow mind dear old grandpa must have had!"

"No levity, Jonathan. I suppose you don't remember that you have nine brothers and sisters, that Polly is in society, and Jean to be brought out next December, and Rufus entering Harvard in October."

"Rufe's got a bully good physique," Jack remarked dreamily; "there ain't an ounce of superfluous flesh on that kid. I see him in the eleven."

"And I suppose," his father commented, "that you think you're going back to study law—ostensibly—really to fool away again five thousand a year."

"Such was my fond dream, boss."

A dry, satirical smile lit up Amos Dexter's face for a moment.

"Well, I hope I am boss—at least to the extent of keeping my children from making fools of themselves any oftener than necessary. You think you're going to study law. I say you're going down to New York to earn your own living for a year. If you do that I might send you to Harvard again."

The young man lolling in the armchair sat up at last, displaying as he did so a good, straight spine, a well-shaped head set squarely on his shoulders, and a certain capability of muscle. His father eyed him with distinct disapproval.

"How much did that suit cost that you have on?"

Jack wrinkled his brow in reminiscent thought.

"Oh, a matter of ninety or a hundred. The bill's in that pile somewhere."

"I presume so—and that necktie?"

"Only two dollars."

Amos Dexter groaned.

"I can only wear fifty-cent ties myself."

Jack's face grew solemn.

"Father, this is the opportunity I've long been praying for. You know your neckties are something awful. I've often wondered why mother didn't tip you off to the fact."

"Your mother has enough to do looking after the children without concerning herself with my ties."

"The mater is all right," Jack said. "Any lady who has had ten children and still keeps her figure and her serenity——"

"Jonathan!" his father interrupted sternly.

Silence fell between them. Jack gazed somewhat ruefully at the pile of bills on the table, then out of the library window at the Palisades in view beyond the broad stretches of the lawn.

"Seriously, dad, I've got to go back

to Harvard. I want to be a lawyer with all possible haste. You see, I'm by way of becoming engaged."

"I am obliged to you for sparing me at least the announcement of your marriage to a chorus girl. Who is the lady?"

"Ivy Bradford, without doubt. She hasn't accepted me yet."

Amos Dexter stroked his chin reflectively.

"Samuel Bradford and I grew up together, and neither of us has any use for a spendthrift. I don't see Sam handing his only daughter over to a young man whose only claim to distinction is the bills he contracted at Harvard. I think better of my old friend's judgment than that. Where's Ivy now?"

"Visiting on a ranch out West."

"I wish I'd put you on a ranch instead of sending you to Harvard. What did you learn there, anyway? You don't even use good grammar."

"Exact grammar is terribly *bourgeoisie*."

"That's French for people who amount to something, isn't it!"

Jack grinned.

"You ask me what I learned at Harvard—well, for one thing, to take the game as it came. What's the next move, dad?"

"Your next move is to New York. I'll tell your man, as you call him, to hang up your fine clothes in your room and put moth balls in the pockets. Then I'll give him a week's wages and dismiss him. You had no business to appear here with a personal servant, anyway. No one maids your sisters. They have to depend on one of the house girls to hook 'em up."

"This is interesting. After the man goes, and my suits are hung up, and my ties have gone to their long home on the gas fixture, what next, dad?"

"New York for yours, my son, and an allowance of a dollar a day. That will keep you from starving."

An old rhyme that his nurse used to croon to him floated through Jack's brain:

A dollar a day is very poor pay
At work on the bou-lee-yard.

He smiled his acquiescence.

"And all I can save out of seven dollars a week, Sundays included, and no reduction made for absences, is mine, I suppose, to hoard as I will."

"Don't be impertinent."

"Also, you've no objection to my hocking my scarfpins when the heavy storms of necessity blow around my undefended head."

"You'd better give them to me. It's time I looked almost as prosperous as my own son."

"Have you any objection to my doing anything—honest toil, you know?"

"I don't care what you do, so you do it well. If you can support yourself for a year, and get rid of your expensive habits, you can at the end of that time return to Harvard."

Jack drew out a gold cigarette case engraved with his monogram. He handed it to his father, murmuring gracefully:

"The downfall of the scion of a noble race was accompanied by all the pathetic dignity of such a spectacle. He embraced his retainers, giving to each a kind word and some token of his former greatness. His diamond knee buckles he presented to—"

"You are jesting, sir."

"Dad, will you kindly hand me that time-table on which your elbow is resting? I am taking an afternoon train to New York."

DEAR POLLY—SIS: What a good sister you are to remember your brother in his poverty and obscurity, and to invite him out to your Cinderella dance on the twenty-third of October. You say Ivy's to be there; and you hint, Polly-fashion, at inquiries in her letters concerning my absence and silence. I understand she's arriving some time this week from that confounded ranch. If she's fooling with a cowboy, just remember that I can handle a gun, too. How girls are caught with melodrama! I thought Ivy had too steady a head to be bowled over by the spectacular.

I can't come to your dance because, dear sister, I am, as you've no doubt suspected for many weeks, a horny-handed son of toil, a member of the proletariat, of the poor and, occasionally, honest section of the community. I am earning a living wage and envying my superiors. I wash my own celluloid collars, and yearn for a redistribution of wealth. I could give St. Francis points. My dinner

pail is not full, and I attend meetings of the Far-from-Satisfied Club, the object of which is to learn how the inferior man can grab the wealth earned by superior brains. I've learned that envy is the root of all socialism.

In other words, dear, I'm lodging over a garage, and am one of the staff of chauffeurs. When I'm told to get up and take the machine out, I get up and take the machine out. That sufficiently describes my day.

It was the only thing between me and seven a week, Polly; and the only thing I could do, for I didn't do much else at Harvard, except take joy rides and play bridge, and now I'm tasting the bitter fruits of a wasted life. Don't you waste your life, little sis. You marry a millionaire!

So that's how it listens like I couldn't come to your party. I don't get much time off, for the manager suspects I'm a duke in disguise, and sends me out with all the bad stylish cases. I'm supposed to ornament the machine.

Give love to my inexorable father and to mummie. Tell her I don't suffer as much as she thinks in her letters. Love also to Rufus, Jean, Alice, Hugh, Bennie, Gwen, Betty, and Champ. I'd send you some candy, Polly, if my funds weren't so low.

Your affectionate brother,

JACK.

P. S.—I've shaved off my mustache.

Having delivered himself of this epistle, Jonathan Dexter mailed it, and returned sad, but with a clear conscience, to the garage. In spite of what he called his privations, his weeks of hard work in town had had a zest in them which he could not altogether ignore. This seeing life from the reverse side, this serving the wealthy and important, instead of mingling with them, had aroused in Jack the first reflections on life, labor, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness of which he had ever been guilty.

As he reentered the garage, a fellow chauffeur handed him, with a wink, a letter addressed to Jonathan Dexter, Esq., and forwarded from his own home on the Hudson. He recognized Ivy's square, black handwriting and elaborate monogram. To his annoyance, he felt himself blushing vividly.

Her communication was brief, but to the point. She was returning to New York on the seventeenth of October. She hoped to see him very soon afterward, as she expected him to clear up the cloud of mystery in which he had been for the time hidden. She didn't

like mysteries, and she didn't like to lose sight of her old friends.

Jack smiled, and tore up the letter. How she insisted that they were friends! The word seemed as cold as the frosty wind sweeping into the garage. So identified with his part had he become that Ivy appeared as far off and inaccessible to him as a princess in a distant star. But this very fact stirred his pulses to swifter and warmer throbings. He went upstairs to his cubicle, took her picture out of his pocket, and gave himself up to a purple interlude of romance.

The seventeenth of October came and went. Every day thereafter, in his brief moments of leisure, he strayed around to Madison Avenue to look at the unresponsive brownstone of her dwelling. One evening as he stood gazing in a rather desperate mood at the lighted windows, he saw a tall, athletic-looking man mount the steps and disappear into the interior. This quite-to-be-expected phenomenon agitated him curiously. No joke, no system of philosophy came to his rescue. He realized as he had never done in his Harvard days that Ivy Bradford represented for him all that made life worth living. He had a sudden impulse to follow the intruder; then he remembered he was in uniform, and turned sadly back to the garage.

"Herrick."

"Yes, sir."

"Take one of the touring cars around to Eight Hundred Ninety-eight and One Half Madison Avenue. They'll want you for the evening. There's been some accident to their own machine—Samuel Bradford's house."

He knew that only too well! At the mention of the number he had turned quite pale, and now at the very prospect of going there he felt himself in a nervous tremor.

"Well, don't stand there with your mouth open!" the manager said sharply. "Bradford's one of our best patrons, and he's no hand to wait. Hustle!"

Jack rushed upstairs, got into his furred chauffeur coat, for the use of

which his wages were weekly docked, and, with the instinct of disguise, fitted on a pair of goggles, though the night was still. His reappearance was greeted with some merriment from his co-workers.

"Herrick's afraid of a dust storm."

"Say, duke, you're good-lookin' enough without those owl eyes."

"That's all right, boys. Luddick, crank the machine, like a good fellow!"

In another moment he was off. As he drew up in front of the house, his hands felt numb and the wheel itself as if made of ice. He had no time to get out and ring the bell, for a footman immediately descended the steps with a bundle of rugs.

Shortly afterward Ivy herself appeared. He dared to steal a glance over his shoulder, and the vision he beheld of a golden-haired girl, slender as a lily in her long white evening cloak, awoke in his breast a world of bliss and misery. The misery was the contribution of another figure—the athletic-looking man he had seen mounting the steps on a previous evening. Back of Ivy came her chaperon, her portly Aunt Martha. Last of all, Samuel Bradford himself in a sack coat. Evidently he was not accompanying the party. He came down to the machine, and, after helping the ladies in, turned to Jack.

"What's your name, young man?"

"William Herrick, sir."

"Well, take good care of these ladies—no speeding, remember—no sharp corners; and you're to go to 'Broad-view' beyond Yonkers, the residence of Mr. Amos Dexter. Know the place?"

"I've been there often, sir."

Then Jack remembered that it was the night of the twenty-third. He was en route, after all, to Polly's Cinderella dance.

When his machine got fairly in front of the big entrance hall, and he saw the dancers through the lighted windows and heard the strains of an orchestra, a desperate resolution formed itself in his mind. As in a dream he heard a masculine voice saying: "Bring the machine around at twelve sharp,"

and realized that he was receiving orders from a hated rival.

But there was no time to cherish the grievance. He ran the machine back to the garage, and then, making his way through a group of chauffeurs, went straight to the kitchen and asked for Mrs. Nora O'Brien, once his nurse, and now a presiding deity in the household. She appeared after a while, stately in black and a beribboned cap, and prepared to frown upon a strange chauffeur.

"What are you wantin'?" she demanded.

He removed his goggles.

"Lord forgive me! 'Tis Master Jack. Oh, my poor boy! Come in, darlin'. Are you hungry?"

"Hush, Nora. Is the coast clear to my room?"

"Shure it is!"

"I'm going up to get into my evening clothes, but no one must know, for I'm a hired chauffeur."

Nora wailed:

"Oh, the croolty of your father's heart! His own son—his own flesh and blood!"

"That's all right. Keep quiet. I've got to hurry—if I'm not Cinderella tonight, I'm Cinderella's brother. I've got to leave before the clock strikes twelve. Tell me, are my father and mother home?"

"Visitin' in Boston. Your Aunt Ophelia's chaperonin' the girls. I'll help you, me own boy, and thin as a rail, you are! You go 'long, and shtop in the night nursery on the way up. The childer are missin' you so."

He did as directed, and leaned for a cozy, happy moment over the beds of his small brothers and sisters. Enchantingly pink and somnolent, they greeted him with drowsy murmurs of his name and moist clinging of little fingers. He went on to his room feeling as if he had never been away.

"I want you to explain," she demanded.

In the warm, shadowy air of the conservatory the two were seated at last after a dance which Jack had snatched

by virtue of his sudden and mysterious appearance among the dancers.

"There's no explanation, Ivy. I came here to-night to become engaged to you."

"Do you expect a girl to become engaged to you—a girl to whom you haven't written for six months, and on whom you haven't called since she returned to town?"

"I am not in the position to call on a lady."

She tossed her head.

"You and Polly both enjoy mystifying me, it seems."

"Dear, won't you give me some hope? If you will, I may have the courage to—"

"The music is about to begin, and Mr. Randall will be looking for me."

"Mr. Randall is your escort—from the West!"

"He is not a Westerner," she said with dignity. "He comes of a long line of Yale men."

Jack groaned in spirit. His Harvard blood boiled against his rival.

"My father thinks a great deal of him. He is wealthy, but he has worked as hard as if he were a poor man. His ranch adjoins the one I visited on."

"And he wants to marry you, I suppose."

"He has never said he didn't."

"You know he's mad about you," Jack said hotly.

"That's not my fault."

Silence fell between them. Ivy broke it.

"Are you going down to New York to-night?"

"Yes."

"There's an extra seat in our machine. We'll give you a lift, if you like."

"Thank you. I am obliged to decline."

"That's not gracious of you."

"Ivy, will you—"

"Hush! Mr. Randall is coming!"

She introduced the two men, who shook hands rather frigidly.

"I am to have another dance, remember," Jack reminded her.

"I'll do my best for you," she answered,

and floated away, a sweet, tormenting vision.

After that he danced with the girls Polly led him up to, keeping one eye on the clock and one on Ivy. Half-past eleven came, and she made no sign, but at twenty minutes to twelve she glided toward him under the wing of her chaperon.

"There are just two dances left before midnight. Will you have this one or the next?"

"This one."

The music was slow in beginning. A fever of impatience possessed him. He kept glancing at his watch, answering Ivy's remarks in an absent-minded manner. She exclaimed at last:

"You are too provoking—and you are very rude."

He nodded sympathetically.

"Yes, I'm very rude! What's the matter with those fellows? Why don't they begin?"

"Do you find it so hard to talk to me?"

"Ah, dearest!" he murmured.

The music began at last. They glided away together, but his enjoyment was marred by calculation—so many minutes to rush upstairs and change; so many minutes to go to the garage and bring the car around. He glanced down at Ivy, whose face expressed only a quiet pleasure—and, it even seemed to him, a deep content. He hesitated, then stopped abruptly.

"I must go—dear. I'm so sorry; but I have to run."

She came out of her dream, drew back from him in astonishment.

"You are leaving me in the middle of a dance!"

A hurt note was in her voice, a hurt, incredulous look in her eyes that for a moment made him long to cast everything to the winds. But there was no time for further confession. Turning away his eyes, he hardened himself to say:

"It's a serious engagement, Ivy. Where is Miss Corville? I'll take you to her."

Ivy remained white and mute, but as

he left her she gave him a reproachful look.

"Forgive me," he murmured.

"It will not be easy to forgive you," she replied.

Speeding along toward New York, the conviction became clearer and clearer to him that he must act quickly, but as to what he must do he was somewhat in doubt. Not until the machine was actually in front of the house in Madison Avenue and he heard Randall saying, "No, thanks, I'll walk around to my club; but may I call to-morrow afternoon?" did the inspiration seize him. He descended from his seat, and addressed Miss Corville.

"May I have the favor of a word with Mr. Bradford?"

The elderly lady regarded him with some suspicion, but evidently it occurred to her that the young man might wish to speak with Mr. Bradford on a matter concerning the charges for the evening. She assented to his request, and the chauffeur following them at a respectful distance, he was given into the charge of the footman, who left him for a moment cooling his heels in the hall. He was then ushered into Mr. Bradford's study. At this critical moment Jack again removed his goggles.

"So you've been doing this six months! Well, I like your spirit. Have you set your heart on studying law?"

"I've set my heart on nothing but marrying Ivy."

"A man from the West is, I believe, in a similar situation," Samuel Bradford remarked.

"I met the gentleman this evening—once as a chauffeur and once as the member of a rival university. I don't know whether I could beat him at running a ranch. I'd be willing to try."

Bradford mused a moment.

"I need a man to put in charge of my rubber plantations down near Georgetown, British Guiana. There're big chances in South America now. How would you like to go down there?"

"Bully!" Jack exclaimed. But added, after a moment: "Would the climate agree with Ivy?"

Bradford smiled.

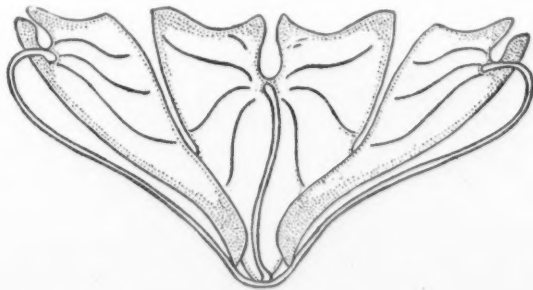
"I think it's as good as the West." He touched an electric bell.

"I'll send for her. We'll get her views on climates."

She appeared a few moments later, still holding her gloves and flowers. At sight of Jack she stopped short, glancing first at him, then at his goggles on the table, then at her father. Her formal look gave way to a sudden, radiant, comprehending smile.

Jack rose and came to meet her, blushing and stammering.

"I—I came down with you, after all, Ivy. We're—going—to South America. You and I!"



The Woman Who Was No Use

by Samuel Gordon



THE end of turn Number Six was marked by brief and half-hearted applause. From the gallery of the little third-rate music hall came the suspicion of a catcall or two. Nellie Brown, vocalist, as she was described in exceedingly small letters on the posters, thought it quite a good reception for the second house on a Saturday night. She had no illusions about her capacity to please the class of audience before whom she had been appearing.

The manager met her in the wings, and almost without a word handed her the narrow, oblong envelope containing two sovereigns in gold and five shillings in silver, being her week's salary of two pounds ten, less ten per cent. commission for her agent. She scribbled her name under the receipt, and hurried back to the dressing room.

She was glad to find it empty. All the week she had shared it with two serios, who had nearly talked and giggled her nerves to tatters. She removed her make-up, changed to her ordinary attire, and proceeded to do her packing. There was very little of it. Her stage wardrobe consisted of but one dress. She had overheard the serios remarking on the fact in no very respectful terms.

She went through her task in a hazy, mechanical way. It was only when she affixed the label to her trunk that she suddenly became alert and alive. The address on the label reminded her that

her luggage was going back to her lodgings at Brixton. It was not going on to another hall for the coming week. The list of her engagements was at an end.

And that thought brought home to her the necessity of finding an answer to the important question: How was she to tide over the lean and empty weeks which she saw looming in front of her?

She sat down on the trunk, and supported her head against the wall. But though she closed her eyes, the grim, gaunt specter of the future stood out more forbiddingly before her mental vision. With a little gasp she gathered herself up again to finish her toilet before her roommates returned. She would have ample leisure to think the matter out at home. She turned as the door opened, and the dresser entered.

"Gentleman to see you downstairs—here's his card, miss."

Nellie Brown, so-called, took it from her, stirred by a dubious hope. Perhaps—at the eleventh hour—some agent desirous of putting her on his books. But as she glanced at the card she gave a great start. It was evidently a name she had not expected to see.

"What shall I tell him, miss?" prompted the dresser impatiently.

"Say—say I shall be down in a moment."

Fred Barrington! Her feelings oscillated between pleasure and annoy-

ance, with a strong inclination toward the latter. She had thought herself quite safe in this underworld in which she had sought sanctuary. Had there been another exit she would have given Barrington the slip.

Then she nerved herself to face the inevitable. She showed no outward trace of emotion as she stepped past the porter's box into the street, where Barrington stood waiting.

"Hello, Maisie!" he greeted her cheerily.

"Good evening, Fred," was her quiet reply. "What do you want?"

"Now, that's a nice thing to say to an old chum," he reproved her, with a laugh. "Still, you're not going to frighten me off with your ungraciousness. Will you come and have some supper with me?"

"I don't think so, Fred," she said, her brows wrinkling doubtfully.

"Oh, don't say that. Not for the sake of old times?"

Perhaps it would give her a better chance of shaking him off.

"Very well," she agreed, after a pause, "if you won't keep me too long." She had also to think of her last bus home.

Instantly he hailed a passing taxicab, and assisted her into it. Without a word they sat facing one another for some little time as the vehicle whirled on.

"How did you get to that out-of-the-way place?" she asked him suddenly.

"Oh, pure accident. You know I like delving into odd nooks and corners."

"Do you? Well, that's the first I hear of it. I thought you were always rather fastidious in your tastes."

"I've got out of that—am cultivating new habits for a change," he said offhand, secure in the semigloom which concealed the guilt of his prevarication on his face.

Why tell her that the accident, as he called it, was due to the efforts of a first-class detective agency he had employed for the last six months to trace her? He had to be careful not to let her take alarm.

She sat wrapt in her thoughts till the taxi pulled up at the destination he had given the driver. It was a small but select restaurant off Pall Mall. As she passed through the swing doors into the vestibule, a flood of warmth and comfort suffused her.

She felt like an exile who has come home again. The dark past was effaced by great splashes of light. She wondered if she had not been dreaming a nightmare and had woke up to find the world a rosy spring morning, brilliant with the golden hopes of her girlhood. No clouds had gathered, no storm had burst—she was still sailing gayly on the laughing ocean of life, and there had been no shipwreck.

And then she glanced at the man opposite her, and with a shudder she remembered. Oh, yes, it was all true—the clouds, the storm, the shipwreck. Else she would not be sitting at this table, supping with Fred Barrington. And Fred Barrington could vouch for it all.

He handed her the menu.

"Anything—anything," she said, waving it off.

Quietly, and with man-of-the-world precision, he gave his orders.

"And now, Maisie," he said, bending over to her, "will you let me talk to you?"

"It depends on what you are going to say," she replied uneasily.

"To begin with, a question or two. Not from idle curiosity—you know me better than that."

"Well?"

"What did you do with yourself when the case was over?"

"What all wounded animals do. I hid."

"I know you disappeared. But why? There wasn't the slightest occasion for it. You left the court without a stain. It was clear enough that all the fault of the unfortunate business was on—on your husband's side. You could easily have kept your place in your set."

"What, after the revelations, after the way in which my naked soul was held up before all those prying eyes—

after the hideous details of my martyrdom?" she exclaimed, her words coming with a rush. "My set! Oh, I could have stood their contempt, but I couldn't stand their pity. And in their heart of hearts they would always have considered me the one to blame. A man is usually what his wife makes of him. I have heard it remarked of other women. I have said it myself in the early days of my married life. They could say it of me if they liked, but I wasn't going to be there to hear it."

He paused reflectively. Then he resumed:

"I knew you were sensitive. But if so, why did you insist on a judicial separation? Why the publicity of the courts? The whole thing could have been arranged quietly and without fuss in the privacy of a solicitor's office."

"It wasn't safe," she said curtly. "I understood that would still have given him the right of access to me. I wanted a legal barrier. And, besides—" She broke off with a catch in her voice.

"Yes, besides?"

"Perhaps I should not have let it come to that. Perhaps I might still have gone on suffering in silence. But you forget that the child died. That made me desperate," she added, in dull tones.

"Oh, yes, the child died," he echoed vaguely.

"The one link that still bound us outwardly snapped. I could have forgiven him everything—the strange fits of sullenness, the brutal outbursts of temper, the—I don't know if there was anything more to forgive. But I could not bring myself to live any longer under one roof with the man whom I considered my child's murderer."

"Maisie!" he exclaimed, shocked.

"I mean what I say. The guilt of my darling's death rests on his conscience, if he has such a thing. The boy had been ailing for some time. In spite of that he insisted on our taking the long journey up north in the bitter cold winter weather. Oh, my Reggie, my Reggie!"

He gave her time to collect herself before he spoke again.

"Of course, if you thought that, I'm not surprised you refused the allowance he offered you. You took nothing with you. You have no means of your own. How—what—"

"What I did for a living? I earned it."

He nodded. He did not want her to know what he thought of the pitiful specimen of her attempts at making a livelihood he had witnessed that night. She seemed to guess his commiseration by instinct, for she pulled herself together with some show of dignity, and reached out for her gloves. Quietly he moved them out of arm's length.

"Nonsense, Maisie," he said bluntly. "You can't run away yet. You've only just come. And you've scarcely touched a thing. Here, try some of this excellent Moselle—you'll like it."

"I thought the cross-examination was over," she said, settling herself back with an air of resignation. "Anything else?"

"Yes," he said brusquely. "Has it ever occurred to you to give Arthur the benefit of the doubt?"

"What do you mean?"

"That, though he was undoubtedly in the wrong, you were perhaps a trifle hard on him?"

The glass she had lifted halfway to her lips came down hard on the table. Then she laughed mirthlessly.

"There it speaks—the voice of my set!"

"Oh, dear, no. I don't take my cue from other people. It's just my own private opinion. I'm entitled to that, I think, Maisie. I've known you and Arthur longer than anybody else has. Why, I might say we were all children together. As a hardened bachelor I may not be an authority on matrimony—or, perhaps, for that very reason, all the more so. But I've an idea it's largely a matter of give and take. I know there was good stuff in Arthur."

"Of course, you men all have excuses for one another," she said bitterly.

"We all thought he was cut out for great things," he went on, ignoring her interruption. "And then something went out of gear with him." He

dropped his eyes self-consciously before her steady gaze. "And now, Maisie, one straight question: Is there any chance of your ever coming together again?"

She half rose from the table, startled and indignant.

"None," she rapped out.

"You wouldn't let him—make the attempt?"

"I would sooner——" She broke off and fixed him with a penetrating look. "Has he sent you?"

"No."

"Has he?" she repeated.

"On my honor—no."

"He knows better." She flung the words at him from between half-closed lips.

Barrington drummed the table nervously.

"Maisie, I'm afraid I'm a clumsy fool. I've given you a wrong impression altogether. The reason why I wanted to know was——"

"Well?"

"Fact is, I'm feeling a bit uneasy as to what's going to become of you," he said, mustering up his resolution. "It's quite clear you can't go on as you have been going. I can't bear the idea that I am reveling in luxury——"

"Why not, Fred?" she cut him short.

"You forget, Maisie." His voice had a tremor in it. "You know there was a time when I had hopes. The hopes, of course, are gone, but there are still memories."

She laid her hand on his compassionately.

"Poor Fred—I thought the wound had healed," she said softly.

"Oh, it's healed right enough—as much as these things ever do heal. But if you wouldn't give me your love, I want you to let me have the next best thing to it."

"And that is, Fred?"

"The right of shielding you, of—— Hang it all, Maisie, you can't continue to lead this semivagabond life. You must get solid ground under your feet again. Now, what I suggest——"

"You're a dear, good boy, Freddy," she interrupted him gently but firmly.

"But it's no good your making suggestions. I won't accept favors from any one."

"Not if by accepting one you are doing one in return?"

She smiled pathetically.

"Have I still the power of doing favors?" she asked.

"It's not going to be a question of hard cash," he explained eagerly. "I can quite understand that the idea of that is repugnant to you. But it's like this, Maisie. There's my place in town. I only set it up a few months ago, and now I've decided to go abroad. Very shortly, too—to-morrow, perhaps. I don't want to break it up; it'll be such a nuisance to fit up another when I come back. I want you to be so kind as to keep it going for me. It won't be much trouble. There's a decent staff of servants. I wish you would, Maisie—there's a good girl."

"That's a queer idea, Fred," she said, startled.

"Not at all, not at all—there's nothing queer about it." He was gazing past her, as he spoke, with a shifty, wily air. "Perhaps I've sprung it on you too suddenly. But take your time and think it over."

"It doesn't seem the thing, Fred," she persisted.

"Not the thing to offer a home to an old friend? Rubbish, Maisie. Anyway, here's the address. Any time you want to make use of it you will find the door open to you."

With a half-indulgent smile she watched him put the card in her hand bag. She knew it was wisest not to argue with him further. Let him think for the moment he was going to have his way. It would give her a better chance of covering up her tracks—more effectively this time, she promised herself.

They rose to go. He saw her as far as the omnibus, and she was thankful he made no offer to accompany her so as to find out where she lived. She did not know that Fred Barrington had made other arrangements for that.

"Well, Maisie, good-by—or, rather, au revoir, when I come back."

She listened attentively to his words—she impressed them deep on her memory. They deserved she should do so. For, in a way, they made history. They were the last echoes—she had quite made up her mind on it—which would ever reach her out of the noise and turmoil of the old life.

She could hardly believe, as she rose on Monday morning, that the interminable suburban Sunday lay behind her and that the world had shaken itself awake again. She knew that this day, or perhaps the next few days, meant much to her. She knew that she had to crowd into them the task of making provision for the future. She would have to grip her destiny with both hands, and wrestle with it to a finish.

The very momentousness of the struggle seemed to imbue her with proportionate strength. She exulted in the consciousness of her courage. No, she had not yet exhausted her resources. Life surely held yet other things in store for her than to be Fred Barrington's housekeeper.

She made a perfunctory breakfast, and then went out to pursue her way westward. Half an hour later she found herself once more in the familiar waiting room at the offices of Mr. Clay, theatrical and variety agent.

"Mr. Clay's sorry, but he's too busy this morning," was the answer the office boy brought out to her.

Her face fell, and her lips twitched tremulously.

"But I must speak to him—it's very urgent," she faltered.

Again the office boy disappeared, and reappeared with the message that Mr. Clay would see her. She followed, taking heart of grace.

"Good morning, Miss Brown," the large, genial-looking Mr. Clay addressed her. "I thought I had better spare you a few moments—it will save both of us time in the long run."

"Yes, Mr. Clay."

"It's only fair I should tell you that I can't possibly do anything more for you, Miss Brown. I'm sorry," he went on rather kindly, as he saw her change

color, "but it's doing you a favor to let you know the exact state of affairs. I got you that little trial tour, as I promised, but I can't get you any return dates or new contracts. You see, my dear, I wanted to give you a chance, but it hasn't come off. Yours is just an ordinary straight turn. You can never expect to be anything more than a fill-up while they're setting the scene behind for one of the big acts on the bill. There's hundreds like you. They flutter along for a little while, get a booking here and a booking there, and then they disappear. Perhaps you can think of something more striking. If you do, give me another look-up and we'll have another go. So-long."

She walked out into the street, holding herself very stiffly. It was not a good beginning, but there was no need yet to give way. She had so far shot only one of her bolts. She had two left. The odds were still in her favor. She hurried through the bustling crowd, trying to imagine that she was bent, like the most of them, on some trivial, haphazard errand. She was not one of life's equilibrists balancing herself on the very edge of doom. With a deep-drawn breath she paused for an instant before entering the great fancy-goods firm, where she was making her next call. After the usual formalities, she was admitted to the manager's sanctum.

"I should like to do some more work for you, Mr. Hartley. I've been otherwise engaged lately, but now I'm free again."

The thin, keen-eyed man looked at her, and shook his head.

"We're stocked up for months, Miss Brown. I'm afraid I have nothing to offer you."

"I have several ideas for new designs," she urged. "I'm willing to take an even smaller price than for the last batch."

The keen-eyed man, however, continued to shake his head.

"Much obliged to you, Miss Brown," he said at last. "But I hope you won't think me rude if I'm quite candid with you. Your work doesn't seem to hit our customers' taste. Of the dozen fans

or so you've painted for us not a single one has been sold. Our firm is, unfortunately, not a philanthropic institution, and we have to deal with our artists on strictly business lines. Of course, I may be wrong in my estimate of your talents, and you needn't go by it. You have a large field—why not try some of the other houses?"

The streets, the people, the vehicles, when she came out again, had taken to themselves queer shapes and coloring. Everything showed blurred and misty. Hastily, as she felt an access of fainting come over her, she made for rest and refuge in a cheap refreshment place.

The cup of tea and the scone she ordered called up to her comparisons with Fred Barrington's supper the Saturday night before. Once more the delicate viands steamed in front of her, once more the wine foamed in the glass. With an angry sob she thrust the recollection of it from her. She had no superfluous strength to waste on resisting temptations.

The rest and the slight meal did her good. She felt fit enough to get on to her third and last place of call, the registry office where she had entered her name. Her heart beat rapidly, but her step dragged as she mounted the stairs. So much depended on these next few minutes. The girl in the anteroom whispered to her mysteriously:

"Miss Dyke wants to see you. She was going to write to you. Don't know what about. I'll tell her you're here."

A wave of thankfulness swept through her whole being. At last! But the forbidding look on Miss Dyke's face was not quite in keeping with the foreshadowed promise of a situation.

"Miss Brown—at least I had better continue to call you that for the sake of convenience," were the lady's opening words. "I'm glad to have the opportunity of expressing to you personally my extreme displeasure at your disgraceful conduct."

"I beg your pardon, Miss Dyke."

"Oh, of course, you know nothing. It was only to be expected of you that you would try to keep up the farce.

But it's useless. I have discovered your secret. I know who you are. A client of mine saw your photo here and recognized it. To think of your getting me—me to put you on my books, when all the time your name, your right name, has figured in one of the greatest scandals of the day. I am not sure that your imposition does not verge on the criminal. Who do you think is going to put children in charge of a woman with a history like yours? Kindly leave this office at once."

"Thank you, Miss Dyke. I will."

She must have been walking quite a long time before she became conscious that she was not rooted to one spot, had not grown into the stones under her feet, a pillar of stone herself. A great alarm came over her to think that the power and responsibility of motion, action, and thought still remained with her.

A sullen drizzle had set in as she turned her steps into one of the parks. She thought that if she tried hard she might even recall the name of the park. The ground squelched marshily underfoot, and a gusty wind tried in vain to play with the sodden autumn leaves. Slowly she sauntered along. She was in no haste.

At last she was cured of the impatience which usually, when she was away from home, chased her back again thither. She had no longer reason to expect the letters containing offers of work which she always hungrily hoped would be waiting for her on her return. She was no longer anxious for news. The information she had gathered that day would last her for a little while to come.

And now she must make an effort to treat the situation practically, methodically. Her whole belongings amounted to thirteen shillings—inauspicious figure! The remainder of her last week's salary had gone to settle up her arrears of board and rent to her landlady. No doubt Mrs. Morrison—she wasn't a bad sort—would give her credit again for another three or four weeks.

But what were her chances of paying her debts at the end of that, or any

other, period? Her poor little accomplishments, having been tested, had been found wanting in any market value. She was one of the women who were of no use in the world. Least of all was she of any use to herself.

She sat down on a bench that had kept tolerably dry under the spreading branches of an acacia tree. Her thoughts were getting muddled. She wandered about in a labyrinthine maze which always brought her back to her starting point.

And at last she could not even find that starting point, and her arms shot out wildly, aimlessly, as though she were groping her way physically. Through the gathering shadows of twilight she felt rather than saw the presence of the tattered woman who had huddled down at the other end of the bench.

"Aren't you afraid the rain will spoil your clothes, my dear?" said the apparition, with a thin laugh. And then, receiving no answer, she moved nearer. "Have you got such a thing as the price of a drink about you, honey?"

Acting on an unaccountable impulse of terror, Nellie Brown rose and hurried away.

The thin laugh twanged after her.

"Not class enough for you? Hee-hee! And yet I was as good and better than——"

The words, despite their wheezy virulence of tone, had in them the ring of unmistakable refinement. As in a blinding flash, Nellie Brown saw the future revealed to her in the person of the sneering tatterdemalion. Heavens, was that to be her fate, too?

There was every likelihood of it. Yes, it was quite true—better people than she had been tossed on the refuse heap of life. An agonizing fear, an insensate desire seized her to escape from the threatening doom. She wanted to live—she choked at the idea of the black waters of destruction closing over her. The heart of her youth cried out piteously for salvation.

And it was so easy for her to save herself. All she had to do was to beat down her fatuous pride. Fred Bar-

ington's flat stood waiting for her. What if she accepted his offer? It need not mean the ignominy of surrender, but merely the prudence of compromise. It would give her a breathing space. It would restore to her the possibilities of life which, despite its cruelty to her, she still loved so dearly.

Furtively, fearfully her hand dived into her satchel. Her heart stopped beating for an instant. Was the card still there? With a gasp of relief her fingers closed over it. This scrap of paper was all that stood between her and ruin. The thought seemed as ridiculous as it was terrible. On such small pivots turned the huge wheel of fate.

And then the laughter of it vanished, and her terror yawned at her cavernously, her despair yapped wolfishly at her heels. A passer-by turned in surprise to see her give a sudden leap forward. For at that moment her resolve had come to her.

In frantic haste, as though afraid it would not hold out long enough, she hurried back to her lodgings. Swiftly she packed her few portable belongings in a hand bag. Her trunk she would leave to be sent on after her.

"I 'opes as you've got a good engagement," said Mrs. Morrison.

"Thank you, Mrs. Morrison. I have an excellent engagement."

The drizzle had developed into a sheeted downpour which beat fiercely against the windowpanes of her hansom. She was unspeakably glad of it. The very elements combined to justify her, if that still was necessary.

With a shudder her thoughts harked back to the bedraggled outcast in the park. Had she, too, found shelter, and where? God in heaven! But for Fred Barrington's flat, she might, in no very long time from now, have been such another outcast herself.

"Yes, ma'am, we were told to expect you," said the middle-aged housemaid who admitted her. "Will you please come this way?"

Miss Brown—it occurred to her that she must give some thought to her style

of nomenclature—followed her guide, her mouth set rather mutinously. It did not strike her very pleasantly that Barrington should have considered her coming such a foregone conclusion.

She was glad to be left alone again. The housemaid's manner, though thoroughly deferential, had in it something of prying curiosity. She had looked as if, had she dared, she would have asked point-blank questions. Nellie Brown decided there and then that the line of demarcation should be drawn very sharply. She had as yet but the vaguest idea of her position, her duties, if any. No doubt she would get to know them as occasion arose.

For the present it sufficed her to imbibe with every pore the atmosphere of well-being around her. She yielded herself wholly to the narcotic enchantment of the fairyland into which she had stepped. Between the dingy bed-sitting room she had just left and her present abode there seemed to stretch thousands of miles, thousands of years. There was something almost stupefying in the contrast between these rich carpets, these roseate-gleaming lamps and the oilclothed flooring, the solitary gas jet which left the shadows lurking in every corner of her late lodgings.

It cost her an effort to shake herself awake. She must familiarize herself with her new home. This had evidently been Barrington's room, the best in the house, and he had thoughtfully assigned it to her on leaving. Traces of its masculine occupancy still remained, a necktie in one of the turned-out cupboards, an empty cigarette box or two.

She felt a keen delight in handling some of the beautiful things the apartment contained, in making a slight rearrangement of them. After all, this was her native element. She reveled in this extravagant surfeit of her emotions—how she had starved them in the pinching sordidness of the past few months!

And then suddenly there came a jarring note, an ugly discord which set her whole soul jangling. She had paused before an exquisite cabinet, Indian carved; and more by accident than

design had touched the spring which released the valvelike doors.

She stepped back with a slight shudder of nausea, just as though she had opened a beautiful fruit and had discovered a worm at the core.

From the cabinet there issued a pungently sickly odor. She recognized it at once—it was laudanum. Collecting herself, she thrust her hand in, and drew out a glass-stoppered phial. With a paradoxical feeling she clutched it tightly in her hand, as though to crush the cause of her disgust into nothingness.

So Fred Barrington was a morphomaniac! Instead of the sane, clean-living man he appeared to the world, he was the slave of a terrible vice. Perhaps that was the reason for his going away, to hide in some den of infamy, where he might stoop to the level of a beast unhampered, unchallenged by the conventions.

There was a knock at the door, and with a swift movement she closed the cabinet and secreted the phial in her dress. It was an absurd idea—Barrington would not come back for the bottle, but somehow it seemed to her a symbolic action of saving him from temptation.

The housemaid entered, bringing the tea she had asked for.

"When did Mr. Barrington leave?" she inquired.

The housemaid looked blank.

"Or when is he going to leave?"

"Leave—where for, ma'am?"

"For abroad, of course."

"I haven't heard a word about his going abroad, ma'am."

"Are you quite sure? Perhaps he wouldn't tell you."

"Why, certainly he'd tell me, ma'am—no one sooner," said the maid, visibly nettled. "There's no one allowed to do his packing but me. And he never leaves things to the last moment."

"I think I must have misunderstood him," said Miss Brown dully.

"I think you must, ma'am, if you'll allow me to say so. Is there anything else?"

"No, thank you. I've got all I want."

Misunderstood Fred Barrington? If she was certain of one thing in this life it was that she had not. He had clearly implied to her that he was fully aware of what the proprieties demanded; that he could only offer her this place as a home on condition that he went a long way away from it. So he had not gone away. Nor did he seem to have any intention of going away—so much was certain from the housemaid's positiveness. What was the meaning of it?

She stared fixedly in front of her as though she momentarily expected the solution of the mystery to stand forth in legible letters on the wall.

And then, with a broken cry, she suddenly cowered down on a settee, and hid her face with her hands. At last it was all clear to her—at last she could follow the crooked windings of his morphia-tainted mind. So that was his plan. The cunning with which he had hoodwinked the whole world he had thought quite equal to tricking a helpless, hopeless woman.

That was why he had probed her so carefully as to her feelings toward her husband. That was why he had brought up the almost forgotten point of his boyhood's love for her. She remembered the shifty look on his face when he had first suggested to her that she should make her home here.

With a convulsive sob she drooped her head upon her arms, and allowed her grief and anger to find vent in a torrent of tears.

She sat up with a start. Through the haze that seemed to enwrap her senses she thought she could hear the sound of subdued voices in the corridor. She composed herself, for she knew she must think quickly and clearly. Barrington, too, did not appear to have lost any time. Here he was, hot-foot upon his pestilential errand.

She breathed deeply. Well, it would be speedily seen on whose side was the triumph. The fool! He himself had helped her to her victory. She was the woman who was no use. Nobody wanted her, not the variety agent, not the fancy-goods man, not the registry

matron. She was not good enough for them.

But, thank God, at last she had discovered something for which she was even too good—to be a drug slave's plaything. She would tell him so, and that would be the end of it. With such excellence to her record she need no longer be ashamed to venture into the august presence of death.

She stroked the phial resting on her bosom with a caressing touch. So Cleopatra might have fondled the adder that was to make her a queen again.

From the outer room came the lurch of dragging steps. A heavy hand fumbled clumsily with the doorknob. She stood at the window with her back to the entrance. His first impression of her should be the unutterable contempt she felt for him.

"Hello! That you, Maisie?" said a voice.

She spun round as, at an electric shock. A strangled cry escaped her as her eyes confirmed the incredible thing that had happened. Before her stood, not Barrington, but her husband.

"Well, you needn't look so scared about it," he continued, with a sort of childish reproach; his voice was altogether weak and querulous, with staccato little gasps almost between each word. "They—that is, he said I should find you here. Servants sent him word by telephone. He said you were expecting me. Doesn't look like it, Maisie."

She was slowly regaining control of her faculties. Yes, it was no illusion. This death mask of a face, with the glazed, sunken eyes, was her husband's—this doddering wreck was Arthur Attenborough of whom such great things had once been expected! She saw he was clutching at the back of a chair for support. His eyes leered hungrily at the Indian cabinet.

"I—I'm not very well to-day, Maisie—you may have noticed that," he resumed, apparently ignorant that she had yet made him no reply. "But I'll be better presently. I've got some medicine in there." And with halting steps he stumbled forward.

"Is this your medicine?" she asked, holding the phial up to him.

"What, d'you take it, too?" he said, with a chuckle. "Wonderful stuff, isn't it, Maisie? The elixir of life—nothing short of it. Never without it—never. You see, I've been living with Fred for a long time, ever since—I really forget. This was my room, but he turned me out of it. Said I had to give it up to you. Said you were waiting for me here—oh, I told you that before, didn't I?"

"What else did Fred tell you?" she asked, holding herself stiffly.

"He said—now, what the deuce did he say? Oh, he had ferreted you out, had had a long talk with you, and the upshot of it was that you were willing to patch it up with me. I only had to come and say I was sorry, and all that."

"Fred told you that?" she asked voicelessly.

"He did. Didn't you want him to? You see, he'd got it into his noddle that I was going to the dogs. Just fancy!" He uttered a cracked laugh. "Thought I was going to the dogs! There was only one soul on earth could save me, and that was you. That's why he ferreted you out and brought you here. He's a meddlesome nuisance, is Fred—no, no, he's a decent enough chap, but he's a fool. The idea of your patching it up with me! I bet him—I don't remember what the stakes are, but he's got 'em down in a book—that you wouldn't. He doesn't know as much as we know, does he, old girl?" he added, with a stupidly wisecracking air.

No, and even she had not known everything till now. Now for the first time she saw the canker that had poisoned and corroded his nature—had turned that whilom strong, gentle lover of hers into the unconscionable brute of those latter days. And she had thought it was because he had ceased to love her when, instead, he had only ceased to love himself, to value those great gifts that once had made him a man among men.

Oh, might she venture it? Fred Barrington had shown her the way; Fred Barrington, the great-hearted, who still

deemed him worth saving, who still believed in him—nay, who still even believed in her.

Was all that great-heartedness to run to waste? If only as an atonement to him, if only to expiate the absurd, the cruel misconstruction she had placed on these great doings of his— And before she knew it the words had escaped her:

"Arthur, Arthur! Is it any use patching it up?"

"Oh, I should rather think so," was his reply, pitifully eager and naïve. "But you're only fooling me, Maisie—I'm sure— Oh, bother!"

He tottered back a pace or two, and then dropped heavily into the nearest chair. In a moment she was at his side, had taken him in her arms, and cradled his head on her shoulder. She saw the streaks of gray in his hair. All the mother-tenderness, of which she had no longer need for her dead boy, welled up in her heart and out of her eyes.

He lay there like a child, a contented child. His closed lids opened for a moment, and, looking gratefully up at her, he murmured:

"That feels good, Maisie, awfully good. Hold me like that—tight. Don't let go."

No, she would not let go. She lifted her head with a gesture of infinite pride. Who dared call her any more the woman who was no use?

Fred Barrington paced up and down the library, casting anxious eyes at the clock. Ten minutes had passed, half an hour, an hour, and they were still together. It looked as if his daring, desperate ruse, had succeeded. Then he went out and strolled down to his club.

"Hello, Barrington; you look done up. What been doing—stone-breaking in Portland Prison?" asked one of the men.

"No, something much harder."

"What's that?"

"Trying to play Providence to other people. Whew! Waiter—a brandy and soda!"



TAR down the long, white road, a slowly advancing golden haze hung low. On nearer approach, the luminous veil melted away and yielded to view a varicolored wine cart that groaned and rumbled and squeaked at every inch of progression. It is the nature of Italian wine carts to protest at all motion.

Nino, the fat, white mare, plodded stolidly along, her sides swaying rhythmically to the beat of her great hoofs. Nino was not hurrying—she never hurried; there was nothing to be gained by it. So much road had to be covered before she ate or slept; a little sooner or later—what did it matter? Nino was, in her way, somewhat of a fatalist. What was to be was to be, so why worry, or hasten?

And yet, even her comfortable phlegmatism had been a bit ruffled this afternoon. It was unusually hot, and the gay trappings she sported—and of which she was extremely vain—irritated her just a fraction. The red-and-green worsted balls, depending from her forehead, tickled her nose; her gorgeous apron of coarsely embroidered strips of leather seemed oppressive, and the net with which she was enveloped made her twitch constantly, as though she were attacked with a pest of insects.

The cart itself was quite as resplendent as Nino. It glowed with the colors of Joseph's coat. The spokes were a glory of purple and orange, and the brass hubs, catching the declining rays of the sun, gleamed like

Padre Giuseppe's best candlesticks. There were pictures along the side, too. Young Pietro Faccini, who had come home from Rome the summer before, had seized the first opportunity at hand to display his artistic ability to the countryside.

As for the master himself, he was fast asleep beneath the hood of the cart, and would probably remain thus until their destination was reached. It was not the first time all had been left to the discretion of Nino; but this afternoon she was troubled. Her head drooped, and the brilliant topknot of feathers she was wont to flaunt with such pride and importance, slipped to one side, giving her the dissipated air of an overindulgent reveller.

But it was not Nino who had been thus indiscreet. She had stood quietly for hours while the master, halting at one of the small wayside wine shops on the route over the mountain, had lingered, drinking and quarreling, until nearly dawn.

The trouble began at Luigi's inn. Nino had heard the name of Maddalena mentioned, and then a sneering laugh. It was an ugly laugh, and in it an implication of many things, and it had been followed by a bark of rage from the master. Then curses that made even Nino's ears tingle. There were other voices in confusion, an instant of silence, more cries, and the master's voice again, but this time he was thrust forth from the inn, down the path, and into the cart.

Nino was given a kick and told to

proceed on her way. She was accustomed to an occasional blow, but she could not conceive what had thrown the master into such a paroxysm of fury. It was evident he was very cross with some one else, for again and again Nino heard the name of "Maddalena," followed by tongue-worn expletives which she recognized, from long experience, were forcible indications of his displeasure.

But, after a while, the angry tones thickened, and finally ceased, and the master fell back beneath the hood of the cart, and sank into a lethargic slumber. Yes, something was wrong somewhere. Meditating deeply, Nino began to turn the almost triangular bend in the road.

If at this moment the sleeping carter had awakened and looked forth, he would have seen a girl clad in the garb of an Italian peasant, seated in a small boat that rose and fell gently with the receding tide. She had ceased to row for the moment, and was gazing steadily across the sparkling stretch of blue to the far-away horizon, where water and sky met in a vague blur.

It was a very beautiful scene, with its background of rugged mountains, over the upper slopes of which trailed the interminable dwarf grapevines, and, toward the base, the slender ribbon of white became a definite road, winding down to the villas, set in their riot of gorgeous-hued vegetation and tall, rustling palms.

It was, indeed, very beautiful; but the girl was not thinking of that. Skies were usually as blue, and the sea correspondingly placid. Beauty, one took for granted. It was not to be remarked upon. In fact, she had never given it a thought. It was only the tourists and foreigners who commented at all. It was thus she had learned that all lands were not like hers.

The tiny craft was almost imperceptibly slipping seaward, and, half mechanically, and without removing her eyes from the distant line, the girl began to pull toward the brown rocks, where the slippery seaweed and clinging kelp were even now almost dry in

the fervid sun. She was unmindful of the heat or the blinding glare of the blended sea and sky. She was accustomed to both.

As she drew her boat up carefully within a cleft of rock, safe from the treacherous tide, she looked up at the long flight of steps leading to a pergola, whose green-encompassed pillars marked the first terrace of the grounds surrounding a certain villa.

For a moment, she seemed to hesitate, and, with her foot, gave a tentative push to the boat; then as quickly pulled it back again. But, at last, she threw up her head with a proud air of decision, and, giving vent to a sharp, intaking breath, unfastened the skirt she had folded about her to preserve its freshness.

She laved her hands in a convenient pool in the rocks, dried them punctiliously on her cotton underskirt, and, with much care, smoothed out an imaginary wrinkle here and there.

Hurriedly crossing the road, she brushed against one of the giant cacti that lined its dusty length. A thorn caught in her spotless linen sleeve. She cried out with an exclamation of dismay. It was, indeed, a tragedy—the best her slender wardrobe afforded. And after she had taken so much pains with her toilet! Her arm stung, and already a crimson disk was staining the white. Tears of vexation arose in her eyes. She might have known something would happen. Extra cleanliness brought good to no one. She should have expected some disaster to ensue.

Turning again to cross the road, and, half blinded by her tears, she barely avoided collision with the wine cart. Nino came to an abrupt halt, with a snort and jolt that brought to life the sleeping carter, who began to curse volubly, even before opening his eyes. Meeting with no response, he leaned forth to lazily investigate. The girl was standing rigid by the roadside, pressing her hand to her wounded arm.

"You, Maddalena! You!"

"Yes—I," she responded sullenly. "I knew your pretty speech even before I saw your handsome head."

The irony was really undeserved, for Giovanni was extremely good-looking for his type. True, his big, brown eyes were not as clear as usual, but the olive skin showed a pleasing tinge of red, and his strongly muscled throat rose smoothly from the handkerchief which was knotted about it.

He grunted in reply, and, with an uncouth hand, rubbed his shock of dust-grimed, dark curls, indicating a half-way desire to groom himself.

"Indeed," he growled, "since you have become such a fine lady, none of your kind are good enough to speak to."

The girl flushed with anger.

"Keep a civil tongue in your head," she muttered, and drove her toe into the dust of the road.

Giovanni slowly clambered down from his cart. With a step that wavered somewhat, he approached the girl. The drowsy look had fled from his eyes, and in its place there was something, half menace, half smoldering anger. Instinctively, Maddalena drew back a pace.

The placid Nino, left to her own devices, sighted, ahead, an alluring tuft of green. She started hesitatingly for it, although expecting instant recall, coupled with an imprecation. But, of course, that is a part of life, and to be expected. The imagination of the Italian beast and his brother, the peasant, are nearly of the same caliber.

Nino's digression was not observed, and, unmolested, she snuffed and nibbled to her heart's content. There was yet a long bit of road ahead, and it was well to fortify herself against the rest of the journey.

Meanwhile, the man and the girl stood by the roadside.

"Ah!" sneered the carter. "Is it a *festa* that you are so clean to-day?"

The girl looked down, and moved uneasily. She knew she would encounter great difficulty in explaining to Giovanni's satisfaction her unusual appearance, even if she could think of an adequate excuse. She hesitated long before replying. It were better, perhaps, to deflect his question.

"It may be, judging from your own look, you call cleanliness a sin. I do not."

"So," snarled the man, "you are trying to put me off! Do you think I am without eyes, that I cannot see? Why are you dressed thus to-day? You are like this for no good, I know. Where are you going?"

"That is no concern of yours," with a toss of her head.

"No?" queried Giovanni, as he advanced a step farther. He bent his head until his eyes were on a line with hers. "Maddalena, I hold my temper well, but—"

"Do you think I fear you or your child's rage? That for all your words!" And she snapped her fingers in his face.

The carter grasped her by the wrist, and the grip of his calloused hand left five brutal prints upon her skin. She cried out with pain.

"Oh! You are hurting me! Let me go!" She struggled in vain.

"Why should I?" he sneered. "You are not afraid of my child's rage—no, pretty one, it is merely that I love you. See? You are so beautiful in your spotless clothes, and I want to tarry a while and speak with you. Are we not betrothed?"

Then the jeering note died out of his voice, and a gnash of bitterness took its place.

"Listen to me. This morning at Luigi's, far over on the other side of the mountain, your name was spoken; and the man who uttered it made a jest of it. Do you hear that? Vetro it was who said it—him I have always hated! Who would have won you if he could—he laughed in my face! There were others there, and they laughed, too. I tried to kill Vetro, but they held me back. But I can wait for him just as I can wait for—some one else!"

The girl, who, after the first frantic efforts to free herself, had listened with lowered head, suddenly drew erect, her face blanched with fright.

"You—you would not harm him?" she stammered.

"Harm who?" asked the man cunningly.

"Why—why—Vetro, of course—I—why——"

"You lie!" he cried, and, releasing his grip from her wrist, threw one arm about her, and, with the other hand, forced her head back until he could look down into her eyes.

With drooped lids, she tried to curtail her emotion, but the increasing pallor of her cheeks flaunted terror.

Rage had by this time burned much of the wine's effects from the carter's veins. His face twitched, and the great muscles in his splendid neck pulsed and throbbed with his attempt to control himself. The ends of his fingers bit into her flesh as he clutched her shoulder. The girl winced, but made no outcry. Once or twice, the man tried to speak, but could not phrase his mood. When, at last, he did find voice, his tones were strangely soft and low.

"Maddalena mia," he said, "you are changed. Go no more to this *Inglese* painter, with his poet's tongue; he means no good to you. You are no longer content to be among your own. He has come between us like the shadow there on the mountainside. Strange ideas are filling your head. You think you are a lady because he paints you in his pictures and talks nonsense to you. And all because you have a pretty face. But this I warn you—if he has dared to love you——"

The girl interrupted him with fury.

"Shame upon you, Giovanni! Pig that you are, you do not understand a man like this English milord. True, he does talk to me the while he paints me up there in the pergola, while I sit on the marble seat with flowers twined in my hair, and my lap overflowing with them, and some falling to the ground. And when it is finished it will be sent to some great exhibition in a city called London, a place very far away, and we will both become famous. He has said so. And he talks to me of his world, so very strange and wonderful, and he reads me beautiful poems that he has written himself. And one he wrote to me about myself——"

The carter broke in with an ugly laugh. "Indeed! And does the noble

painter-poet need you so long that you spend hours in the grounds after he is done with his paint pots? I have watched you many times while he pretends to teach you the speech of the *Inglese*, when, in truth—— Bah, what is the use of further talk? It is all about this and much more I heard at Luigi's, and, *Sancta Maria*, if I find what he said to be so—well, let your painter beware of Giovanni. And as for you——" He flung her roughly from him. "You know the knife at my belt is sharp and always ready. That's all."

The girl, freed, laughed tauntingly in his face, sped up the stairway, and shortly was lost in the green of the overhanging trees.

The man stood quite still for several moments, staring, half dazed, in the direction whither she had disappeared. Presently, muttering to himself, he started off after his cart. Far in the distance, he distinguished the brilliant feathers of Nino's topknot nodding along the way. Heaping curses and maledictions on the unconscious offender, he proceeded doggedly in pursuit of the mare.

They stood on a jutting ledge of rock which hung out over the town below them. The stars were still gray in the heavens, and a white moon, gliding out from the mists, danced in the silver path, and found for herself a mirror in the softly sobbing waters of the Mediterranean. All along the mountainside, pin spots of light were piercing the dusk. The breath of night, strange and mystifying fragrance of quiet, came sweetly to them, bearing the faint trace of rose and violet and hyacinth.

Maddalena had once spent a season at the flower harvest in the Maritime Alps. It all came to her now—this gathering of the blossoms. Her own countryside was picturesque, with its vaulted skies, and the sea glowing like a gorgeous opal toned with purple, green, and blue. But there the heavens were just a sheer wall of turquoise, and the hills were not a monotint of brown, but inlaid with countless fragrant jew-

els. She, and Tito, and Alessandro had sat in the sun, picking apart the blossoms which the older workers brought in from the fields in great baskets.

Lorimer took her hand, and held it between his two. It was a small hand, and rather well shaped, but the peasant strain showed in the blunted finger tips, and the calloused palms and roughened skin jarred the uncontrollable impulses that were grappling him. He half released his hold. Then he looked into her eyes again, and came back to the thrill of his first intent.

A bit ahead of them was a strong coping, and, before she could realize it, he had swung her upon the wall, and seated himself beside her.

"Maddalena," he said, "look out yonder at the sails. These old waters have known strange voyagers. Away back, even before the time of the blessed Christ, half-savage pirates swept along the coast and preyed upon them who dwelt here. Even before their day, when the world of men was very young, came strangely bearded Phœnicians from over beyond the horizon there. They were great merchants, and ventured far. Why, it may be that they could have drawn their galleys into the very cove that we see below us.

"And do you know why they came to Italy, and why in every age men have come? Gold nor silver nor precious stones are in the mountains, but there was that more beautiful than the rarest jewel, and more prized than all the gold with which other lands could entice them. They came because the gods made this a land of beautiful women; because they could look into such eyes as yours, and find that life, after all, was well worth its rigors.

"And that which once drew the old Tyrian mariner to brave the tempests of the middle sea, has laid its hold upon me; as the impetuous crusader was well content to forget his quest for the Holy Grail, and as the stolid Dutchman, sailing from the Low Countries, tarried on his voyage, drawn by this priceless thing which has made Italy the lure of the ages, just so have I to-night been

caught with the mad spell that sang in their blood."

He spoke to her, but his head was turned away; his eyes looking out into the mystic distances that veiled his sense of proportion, of responsibilities—even of right, of honor.

The girl listened to him, only half understanding. They were strange words that he was speaking; her untrained mind could only pick the thread of his discourse here and there as it ran through the warp of his thought.

The man himself, from time to time, had forgotten that the other was an Italian peasant, and in his mood had frequently lapsed into English. So that Maddalena but little comprehended his words, yet he spoke an Esperanto which was even before Babel—the tongue that needs no phrase to carry its tale.

The souls of her foremothers, from the Sabine days, stirred her pulses. "Maddalena," they whispered, "thou understandest this man, for behold, he speaketh in his eyes, and thy heart may know his meaning."

And Maddalena, through the almost brutalized shell of flesh that casketed the nearly quiescent strain of these proud-blooded creatures, who, from time to time, in the rolling of the centuries, had left strands of their natures in the coarser woof of her ancestry—heard the call in Lorimer's song, and her hot hands pressed his with a sub-conscious strain of desire.

Lorimer felt the tightening of her fingers on his, and whatever reserve or conscience had held him melted away. He placed one arm about her, and drew her near. He still averted his regard from hers, and gazed out at the sea.

So they sat for a long time, warmed with the one current that flowed through their two beings and made of him and her, for the instant, just man and woman, without the shackles of caste and barriers of station and different race.

Far off in the distance a man sang, his great, coarse, mellow voice barely reaching their ears. Yet, faintly as the notes came, both felt their highly strung natures stirred with the thrall of the

melody. It was the woman who first spoke.

"Signor," she murmured, "I must go."

Her voice broke, and she struggled with herself, but her panting bosom and tremulous nether lip showed the weakness of her control. The man strained her closer.

"Maddalena," he whispered, "you cannot leave me, now or ever. We shall go far away from here, to star-shot skies, and seas that foam along moon-gilded shores. Your lips are sweet with the wine of youth; your breasts are young with the song of life; and there are places which God set amid the bleakness of this world and saved them for us until we should come.

"There is a lake a thousand miles from here—it lies at the foot of mountains that crowd the heavens for breathing space. There are only the winds of the south and the crooning of the waters to keep us company. We shall go there, *carina*, and you shall be to me all the things for which my heart has starved; and the sore places and the scars of hunger and the travails of disappointment shall be healed.

"*Cara mia!* How happy we shall be. You will grow more beautiful with the years, for when Time in his flight thinks to pause, looking down at our joy, he'll turn away, and forget to draw his wrinking finger across your brow or mine. And so we shall live for ever and ever in the glory of the days and the mystery of the nights."

The girl lay against his breast with half-closed eyes, and the picture of the what-might-be before her. She saw the future unfold itself like a glorious rose, warmed by the kiss of spring dews. And her heart was glad. She forgot Giovanni; she forgot the sordid, hungry, toil-laden future of the peasant woman, and she dared to dream and hope.

She heard again the whisperings of her mother's mothers—the women who had known great passions. Through a thousand years of their blood they called to their daughter and seduced her into this whimsy, this fantasy, this

mad, cloying, sweet mirage of romance. Romance! It was new to her; it was strange to her. She felt it, but did not understand. She yearned for it, and yearned without realizing for what she hungered.

Nino saw them first. Her soft gray nose rounded the road just as the man bent down and pressed Maddalena's mouth with his own. Hardly had their lips felt the first clasp, when the mare's whinny broke the night's silence, causing them to start away from each other. So when the cart itself came into sight, the two were already separated; and thus it happened that Giovanni, the scorned, was not torn by actually beholding the vision which his jealous mind had been conjuring in solitary frenzy throughout the day.

As it was, the sight of Maddalena alone upon the road with the *Inglese* was ample flint to his tinderred passions. His heart leaped hot within his thick chest, and the white moon assumed a face of burning red. Impulsively, his hand swept about his sash, and clutched the wire-wrapped handle of his knife.

The possession of the weapon steadied his mind, and, with a wrench of emotion, he mastered himself sufficiently to stifle the flow of threats and maledictions that were burning his lips in a wild eagerness for expression.

The girl saw his blanched face in the moon glow. He stood straight in the path of the down-flooding beam, and she read the message in his eyes.

Lorimer did not, or would not, understand the potentialities of the encounter. By no means a coward when face to face with a situation that called for courage, the contempt of the aristocrat for the peasant dulled his usually keen sense of caution.

The carter motioned to the girl, but she turned to Lorimer. Giovanni walked toward her. She drew away from him, and sidled back to the Englishman, holding her hands before her, as though to fend off any attack upon him.

The gesture enraged the Italian, and he seized her arm. Lorimer broke the clutch of the carter, and interposed himself between them.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you," he said, purring his words with a note of contemptuous assurance.

He spoke as one might address a misbehaving child or an angry woman.

The carter was almost cowed by his social better, but emotions stronger than those of caste were surging the night, and, the man quickly surmounting the peasant, he turned to Lorimer with the bearing of one whom a common love and a brother hate had, for the moment, made his equal.

"She's mine," he cried thickly, "and by the Holy Virgin you've got to leave her alone! I won't have her coming to your house. You shall not walk with her at night. There are women enough of your own sort in the world without need of your playing the devil with my girl. You've already spoiled her with your tales of Rome and London, the big towns. She's not good enough for you, but you've made her believe that she's too good for *me*! She's my sort, and I'm her kind of man. Why didn't you leave her so? Now she has to have a clean dress and wear *festa* ribbons every day. When she is at your house—"

Lorimer broke in upon him.

"Don't go too far, my fine fellow," he said. "Maddalena is a good woman."

The Italian stepped a pace nearer to him.

"I don't need you to tell me that! If I thought differently, I would have settled with you and her long ago. I know that she is a good woman, but I mean that she shall stay so. You understand me. She's good, but she may get to be too good for me. What does she need with learning? Will it show her how to churn better than her mother taught her? Will it help her to make shirts for me, or cook my spaghetti? I won't let her be educated. I'm not educated—she can't be. She knows what she ought to know—what her mother and my mother knew; and what was good enough for them is good enough for her."

Toward the latter part of his outbreak, he glowered at Maddalena, al-

though his words were addressed to the other. Lorimer laughed uneasily.

"You won't have her this, and you won't have her that. Why, you great, coarse animal, you talk as though she were really yours. A fine figure of a lover you make. What an alluring picture you paint—a life of drudgery and breeding, and endless routine of work days and brutal nights, a stretch of gray, cold years, without one high light. You talk of her as you would discuss you poor old mare out there. And you intend her for just about the same existence. You say that she is your sort. Do you actually think that there is anything in common between your reeking, wine-sodden self and a rose of such beauty as she?"

Lorimer's eyes flashed, and he squared his jaw.

"You shan't marry her. I'm damned if you shall. Go find some woman of your own breed, and mate with her. Do you hear me? There are girls with more brawn and strength, who can do your cooking and mending far better, and who will be content to lie in your manger. You like her prettiness, to be sure—so would a satyr. But how long would the flush be upon her cheek after you had her? How soon would it be before the golden glint dulled in her eyes, and her glossed hair was a matted mop? Before five years she'd be an old hag in the twenties, with the glorious olive of her skin a lackluster putty, a parody of herself, with a litter of children at her skirts—a blasted tree, worn out with too much premature fruitage. You, having drained her being of all that was exquisite, would be off after some fresher wench. No, Giovanni, *mio*, you shan't have her."

Giovanni pounded his fist upon his chest, and then tore at the throat of his shirt. He was stifling. This was a new school of fighting. Why couldn't Lorimer talk to him like a man, instead of befuddling his brain with a flood of words, half of which he could not for the life of him understand?

But this much he could realize, and it was driving him into a frenzy: This smiling, cynical, contemptuous *Inglese*

was stealing his woman, and actually talking about it as one would discuss the grape crop or the probability of rain. He was ridiculing him.

Ah, it was that which hurt so much! Had it been Vetro, he would understand what to do, quickly enough. But before this stranger he could not find phrases for which his mind was fumbling.

Yet there was another way to interpret his meaning. And here he felt sure of himself. After all, it was the best way. Women talked, and men acted. His hand stole around his sash again, and his fingers closed on the hilt of his knife. Now he felt himself on his own ground. He knew this speech.

Lorimer saw the gesture, but he did not flinch, and if his heart did flutter, and the tip of his tongue fall numb against his lips, he did not mean that the carter should realize he was intimidated by his show of force, and so he laughed at him. It was an ill-timed laugh. Your Italian, however peasant his strain, is none the less a Latin, and, therefore, temperamental.

Giovanni had suffered much that day. His being had racked with jealousy, hatred, rage; the long hours of brooding along silent roads, the heat of the sun beating down upon his wine-muddled brain, the blind resentment at a conflict of wits, in which he felt himself bettered and shamed in the eyes of his woman—these things were as a pile of fuel stacked ready for the igniting spark.

The laugh did it. His hands writhed and twisted with the kill thirst. Each finger pained with eagerness to share the clutch on Lorimer's throat. But the swirl of body on body, the twisting and the heaving, the turn and clasp, the blow of fist—no, not even the choking strangle grip of his huge paws could stop the hurting. *Per Dio!* He had to kill.

And the woman, crouched on the wall, forgotten by the two in the tense moment, looked upon both and under-

stood. She looked upon Lorimer, and that which was germane in him and her saw the fright of his soul, and knew the meaning of the hysterical laugh. She saw that he was afraid, and with that knowledge the half-awakened bond that was between them began to weaken.

And then she turned to Giovanni. She saw the hunger in his eyes, she saw the nostrils distended with eagerness for the conflict, his head at an assured angle, and his lips tightened, in the silver light of the night.

They were hot lips, full-blooded—the lips of a man in all the pride of his brute glory. She saw the whipsnaps stand out in his neck, tense with strength; and she saw his swelling chest setting his muscles before he struck.

And as she looked the song that rang through her under the spell of Lorimer's romancing died away, never again to be reborn. The strands of silk faded from the woof of her nature. The proud-spirited strain in her was burned out by the hotter surge of the stronger, coarser blood. And she was again all peasant—all primeval—a woman to be mastered, not to be wooed.

Waiting there in the night, as her forbears of the gone ages waited, while cave men grappled in the death lock for their ownership, the cry of the breed rang through her, and even before the coarser blood. And she was again all Giovanni's, and her bosom was empty for his love.

Far down the long, white road hung a pollen of dust that turned to misted silver in the glow of the moon. It wrapped about and hid from view a weary old mare, who, with drooping head and uncertain step, plodded toward home.

Up the mountainside, a man and woman stumbled and scrambled and fought their way, nor paused to rest nor look back. They slunk from tree to tree, and started at every breaking twig and loosened stone.

THE CALL



THEY were a motley crowd—those five—as they clustered round the big wood fire in the club smoking room. There was Gannett, of the *Morning Wire*, and the four others were his satellites. They liked to hear him talk, and they fought for the scraps of wisdom that fell from his lips as hungry sparrows quarrel for the crumbs that are thrown from the window by a generous hand.

Gannett was the leading dramatic critic in town; he was severe, yet always just; and if he blamed, the gall of malice never ran from his pen. On the other hand, when he praised, these four satellites from the subeditors' room knew that the recipients of his favors were earmarked for theatrical renown, if they had not already attained it. And Gannett was seldom wrong.

He was a strange individual, was Gannett. He always wore his clothes carelessly, and the only speck of pride as regards his dress which he allowed himself was to be found in the glaring red socks. They were of bright scarlet, and he had a habit of lolling back in the biggest armchair in the smoking room, and balancing his feet on the mantelpiece, as if to display his weakness to the greatest advantage.

"What I can never understand," Thompson, of the *Morning Oracle*, was saying, "is why did Felicity Manders leave the stage in that extraordinary fashion, a few months ago? Here she

was at the top of her career—absolutely at the summit—then, presto! she vanished. I have always imagined there was something behind that. Do you remember that first night of 'The Derelict Princess,' Gannett? She was playing lead to a house that was ready to rise and hurl itself at her. The first act went with a bang, and the second was ten times better than the first. Then, in the interval before the curtain went up for the final act, Carson, the manager, came to the lights, and announced that she had been called away. Do you remember that?"

"Perfectly," said Gannett, with a smile. "Perfectly."

"And she has never appeared since. I heard yesterday that she never intends to play again."

"I don't think she ever will," said Gannett. "In fact, I'm sure she won't."

"But why—in heaven's name, why? She was the most popular musical-comedy actress of our time."

"And the best," said Gannett. He bit the end off a cigar, and languorously put up his feet to the mantelpiece, then settled himself down into the armchair, and half closed his eyes. "My dear boys," he said, with the same easy drawl he always assumed, "you may rest assured that Felicity Manders never did anything without a reason. You know what she was—never like the rest. A woman of brilliant talent, who could carry a poor play over rough ice to two or three hundred performances, and a good one to five hundred. No one

knew much about her. She would never be interviewed, she made few friends, the sycophants of the stage door she rigorously shunned. No one knew where she lived, no one had the slightest clue to her history. For seven years she held the town, and now—Well, Thompson, you have written your last criticism of Felicity Manders. She will never act again."

He smoked in silence for a while, and the others looked at him. They wondered what was passing in his mind.

"I will tell you the story," he went on. "But, mind you, we are behind closed doors. I was present at that first night of 'The Derelict Princess.' It was to be a big night, as you know, and the papers had shouted themselves hoarse for weeks beforehand over the capital part it contained for Felicity Manders; Cosgrave had laid himself out on the music specially for her, and Gunning had written every word of his lyrics with her triumph in view, and that alone. It was to be the part of her life, so everybody said; and, Heaven, so it was! I was to go to supper after, at the Bruvais', some way out of town, and I ordered my car to come to the door about ten-thirty, and wait, so that I could hop into it and get away as soon as the last curtain was rung down. Bruvais, the iron king, you know, was an old school chum of mine. I used to fag for him, and a terror he was. It was his daughter's coming of age, and there was some sort of a housewarming, and I had sworn on oath to be there. That's how it came about. Bruvais, by the way, turned up three million dollars in as many years over his electric patents; but the beggar never had an ounce of 'side.'"

Gannett hesitated, puffed fiercely at his Laranaga, then swung himself round a little in his chair.

"For five years I was madly in love with Felicity Manders," he announced.

The effect of his words was electrical. This Gannett—the sphinx, the man with no soul above cold-blooded criticism—Gannett, who they believed had never known a single emotion! When they had roared themselves hoarse on a suc-

cessful first night, Gannett had sat like a pillar of ice, with never a smile on his face, never a word of enthusiasm. They had imagined him going back to the office and writing his criticism coldly, forcibly, viewing the play from the standpoint of a man who, seeing things from afar, through a telescope, misses nothing of the detail, but feels none of its emotions.

"For five years," he repeated. "Five years is a bit out of a man's life when he knows nothing, cares for nothing but an all-consuming passion. No one had any idea of my secret, and Felicity Manders, though we were the best of friends, never guessed it. There were times when I had to attack her in print—two only—and I feel now that I would have dealt more leniently with her but for my love; the knowledge of my own feelings, and the adjacent sense of duty I felt for my paper, made me, perhaps, more critical than I need have been. And when I met her afterward I could see the slight flicker of annoyance that passed over her face, as if what I had said had hurt; but, before God, the written words hurt no one as they hurt me.

"On the night 'The Derelict Princess' was produced I met her in the wing just before she went on. I had attended several dress rehearsals, so knew the play backward, and decided I would see it from behind, to-night. I had just left Carson, half dead with excitement, and I ran into her as I left his room. She was full of spirits, bubbling over with sheer merriment. She told me that she believed it would be the greatest night she had ever known, and I was surprised at her confessing so much. She was always so reserved, so silent, though the public had not the remotest idea of it. They believed her to be the most excitable creature that ever walked the earth. I shook her hand, and wished her good luck. I felt it was all I could do.

"Then—well, you recollect that first act. She carried the whole house. It had no eyes for any one but her, it rose at her like a great, cumbersome thing awakened from sleep. Her laugh-

ter—it was like the lively chiming of silver bells—it ran through the stalls, over the pit, then up to the gallery. And then that pickaninny song—do you remember it? She was never in greater voice. The notes were clear and penetrating; and then the bouquets—the roses! Ah, it was a great night!”

Gannett rolled back in his chair, put his feet up to the mantelpiece again, so that the glaring scarlet socks pierced through the smoke haze.

“I remember Carson came along with a newly opened bottle of champagne in the first interval, and together we went to her dressing room. She was lolling back in a chair, smoking a cigarette, and as I looked at her I knew her nerves were all on edge. She had *felt* her whole performance, every word and line of it had cost. She looked up and smiled as we entered, took the glass Carson held out, sipped it once, twice, and handed it back. Then she talked for ten minutes or so, and I remember holding the door open for her as she answered her call for the second act. She slipped past me, a frail figure in her black dress, with silver sequins, and I recollect the heavy aroma of wood violet that floated back as she passed.

“The second act was the biggest thing seen in town for years. She knew she had the time of her life before her, and her acting never reached such a level. Do you remember that plantation song of hers? It carried her hearers up to the gates of heaven. My eyes see the house now, borne out of itself, uncontrollable, mad—just that, irresponsibly mad! As the curtain lurched down after her ninth call, she came off almost as if she did not see those about her. I realized that she was intoxicated with her triumph, for she was a woman who took her work very seriously, and she felt the applause sinking into her soul. There were tears in her eyes. I asked her a question, but she did not hear me, yet her lips were moving. She was walking in a dream, and I felt a sudden clutch of horror lest she would collapse.

“She had hardly recovered herself, and was just about to go to her dress-

ing room when some one pushed a telegram into her hand. It had been held up at the stage door with the other telegrams of good wishes, most of which she had opened ere this and thrown aside. She took the envelope dreamily, and slowly tore it open.

“For some seconds, she held the flimsy in her hand, read it once, and then again, bent over it with growing horror in her eyes and welling up so that the whole expression of her face changed as she stood there. She swayed to and fro, and a moan escaped her lips; I put out my hands to save her, for I thought she would fall.

“She drew herself up. Her face, beneath the paint, was ghastly. She gazed quickly around.

“‘I cannot play any more—I must go to-night—now!’ she gasped.

“Carson leaped forward.

“‘Impossible!’ he cried. ‘You are at the height of your triumph—it will ruin the play—you cannot go—God in heaven, but this is the night of your life!’

“She closed her eyes. The flimsy was tightly clutched in one hand; the other swept across her forehead. I remember, as I looked at her, the blood in me surged in a great flood madly through my veins. I could not speak; I stood a mute thing, unable to shift one foot after the other.

“‘You don’t know,’ she exclaimed, at length. ‘I must go, I will go—this is a question of life or death. Fetch me a car, some one—for a long journey—God, make me in time—I must go—no, don’t stop me!’

“She plunged, her head down, past us, and disappeared into her room.

“‘It’s ruin,’ Carson said, as he glared at me. ‘Gannett, she likes you—go and persuade her—tell her what it means to all of us. Don’t, in heaven’s name, let her go!’

“I went to her room, and as I reached the threshold she was coming out. She had a cloak around her, a white fur cap on her head, and had not waited to change her clothing. Then, as she looked at me, something in her face—till the day of my death I shall never

know what it was—but *something* won me to her side. I realized by an intuition that she needed help. She was alone with some great trouble; and I could help. I breathed a silent prayer that I might be able to take her burden from her.

"A car—have you got me one? Oh, for pity sake, get me one quickly!"

"She stood, a frantic thing, with the flimsy still clutched in her hand, her eyes blazing with a new fire, her small mouth working convulsively.

"I thought nothing of the waiting audience; I forgot Carson—the position—*everything*, save that I must help her, and do something to drive the fear from her eyes. I rushed quickly down to the stage door, and found my own car there, ran back again, and, in a few words, told her I would drive her to the end of the world if she desired it. I remember she followed me down the stone stairs blindly, groping with one of her white, quivering hands along the iron rail, tripping now and again, as if she would have fallen from very weakness.

"I put her into the car, and dismissed my chauffeur. Then I turned to her.

"Where do you want to go?" I asked.

"I felt returning self-control, the need for action without explanation. I was there to obey any command, impossible or otherwise, my nerves tense and braced, my head cool, mingled love and the desire to serve her the one all-paramount emotion in every fiber of me.

"To Trentown—it is fifteen miles, I think—when we get there I will direct you. And thank you so much—so much!"

"I closed the door quickly, and as I did so heard a smothered roar of applause from the theatre, where an exasperated audience was waiting for the curtain to roll up, and, above all, I heard the quick steps that came down the stairs after us, and the shriek of rage and fear that gushed from Carson's lips as we rushed off into the night.

"He was too late, for I had pulled the lever down, and we were away. I wondered, as we swung out through a

break in the traffic, as to how much petrol we carried, until I remembered my instructions to Bates, earlier in the day, to be prepared for a fair run. I plied the horn vigorously, flew round corners, dived here and there through little opening gaps in the night traffic, skimmed past startled pedestrians, and skirted the flood of people that was rushing out of the restaurants.

"It was not until we reached the main road that a string of thoughts began to weave themselves into anything like logical sequence. Why was she going on this mad errand? What had caused her sudden perturbation? The swift changing from a paroxysm of triumph to an overwhelming fear? What lay at the end of the journey? What new chapter in her life had just been opened up? She had volunteered no explanation, as I had asked for none.

"Jove! That was close! A lumbering wagon, coming through the murk with dimmed lights, seemed to swim past so close that I feared the wheels had touched, but darkness closed down on us, and we were in the open road once more, with the clammy cloak of mist pressing in and wrapping us around.

"The moon swung high in the sky, with little wisps of cloud passing swiftly across it; and, in the obscure light, the road ahead appeared as a nebulous streak that had no definite formation. The even 'chug-chug' of the car sent my thoughts plunging again, creating new conjectures, new fears. I felt capable now of reasoning the thing out from a common-sense standpoint. For, you know, I pride myself on knowing something of women and their ways, and one thing stood out apparent to me; and that was, I was carrying her to some one who loved her as I did, some one who was all the world to her.

"The sudden news of the illness of one she held priceless, whose love meant more to her than all the jewels of the earth and all the kingdoms ever created, more than the applause of eager thousands, the love of her kindred in art—that alone had driven her, with

the whole strength of a woman in desperation, to go to him at his call. And I was right; but how right, I did not know then.

"The car flung itself against the wall of pitchy darkness like a driven beast under the unflagging spur. And ever there came to me in the scream of the wind in my ears that one unfaltering sentence: 'You are taking her away from you—away from you!'

"The knowledge of it developed into terror; I slowed down once, and felt that I must demand the motive of this race ere I could go on. I was chasing a phantom, and all the while was driving away from the goal that purposed my life. Yet she demanded it—I could only remember that—and the speed rose higher than ever.

"We reached Trentown, and not till its familiar white bridge came into sight did I stop and climb down from my seat. She had lowered the window as I reached it, and I saw her pallid face staring out at me as the moonlight caught her features and lit them up in all their beauty. In a hoarse whisper she gave me an address, and, after some groping down unfamiliar byways, I found it.

"It was a small, white house; and in the upper windows, screened by green blinds, I saw the faint flicker of light.

"She ran quickly up the steps without waiting to speak to me, and I followed her into the hall when the door was opened. A servant looked at me with mistrust, and held up an oil lamp to my face; but the unintelligible mumble I gave him apparently served its purpose. Meanwhile, she hurried up the stairs, without waiting to remove her hat and cloak, and, dumbly, I followed. Some one touched my arm, but I shook him off, and went on, treading lightly on the thick pile carpets, but keeping close behind the slight figure in front.

"She reached a bedroom door, and passed in without hesitating, closing the door quickly after her. And then I heard a cry—a cry of untold happiness, as if all the melody of united heaven had flung itself into the little room.

"For the cry I heard—the ringing cry of understanding, that pierced through the veil of unconsciousness and brought back reason on its wings—was the cry of a child.

"I waited for daylight to come; then I followed the doctor into the room, almost unknown to him. I shall never forget the picture, just as it flooded my memory then, and as it will always remain. In her dress of silver sequins, she half lay on the bed, her arm curled under the fragile form beneath the sheets. And she was singing, in a quiet undertone, the song with which she had drawn the house the night before, singing it without any effort to please, but in some sublime carelessness—singing it with her whole soul in every note:

"Wild little pickaninny, with your throne
on yonder star,
Will you catch a moonbeam for me and wire
it from afar?"

"A nurse drew me, without speaking, from the room, and we passed down the stairs together. .

"'Poor little cripple boy!' she said, at last, though then I scarcely took in the words. 'He'll get better, now that reason has returned, and his mother has come. But we thought he had gone last night. He is practically parentless, for her husband died years ago, and she is wedded to her art. But, even if she is an actress, she has a heart.'

"'A heart of gold,' I said."

Thompson swallowed his cocktail; then he looked across at Gannett, who had crumpled himself into a semicircle in his chair.

"Well, and what was the end of it all?" he asked.

Gannett examined his dead cigar, then pitched it into the fire.

"When a woman comes through great tribulation, she realizes her own weakness; she needs some one to lean on, to help her. A man can teach a woman nothing; but experience, much," he said tersely. "I married her."

IN MUSICLAND

By William F. Armstrong

A decorative illustration of a musical instrument, possibly a lyre or a stylized harp, with ornate scrollwork and a central vertical element resembling a lyre's frame. It is flanked by two vertical decorative borders with floral and leaf patterns.

IF Mary Garden had been born a man, she would have likely been a noted field marshal, a daring aviator, or of some kindred calling in which nerve, courage, energy, and a vigorous mind must play their part. Had she lived in archaic times, when a woman's power lay only in her feminine charm, wisely applied, existing maps might have experienced change; or if in the medieval, Jeanne d'Arc might have found contentment in her leadership; the stretch of history for long after that appears too rapid and restricted in its limitations feminine to have given her proper breathing space. Being a woman of to-day, strongly possessed of these individual qualities, the natural course open to her as outlet was the stage.

After all, once analyzed, hers is the old Scotch spirit, that, with ability to support it, went out with claymore and whacked the world until it had got what it wanted.

To set forth from Aberdeen via Chicago to conquer Paris, is an undertaking few would aspire to; the route is more devious than Napoleon's from Corsica.

In her frank, casual way, she herself said at our first meeting, five years back, that she had no special career fixed in mind at the outset; she had determined to wait until she found in Paris what there *was* to do before she planned to do it.

The Scotch canniness in her assertion is a good point in favor of its truth. It rather throws us back upon the thought that it was the way she saw things done there that aroused final decision. Its art atmosphere is the sole one in all the world calculated to ripen her type of talent; its theatres, no matter what is done, present a perfect deftness and detail in their doing. To one of keen imagination, appeal there in this phase is complete. In the musical sense it presents less.

The Paris Grand Opéra was then, and still is, one of the worst existing travesties of the traditional. The Opéra Comique alone in the musical-dramatic field held the suggestion that likely helped Miss Garden to a knowledge of her powers.

At the Opéra Comique there exists, under Carré, an essence of thought, which, thus far, has proven too elusive for general transplanting. As the best woman exponent of its aims, Miss Garden has embodied and practically surpassed them.

Of her vocal limitation she is, and appears to have been always, entirely conscious. It is, with her, not the great voice, but the great intelligence behind it; her acting, as powerful as that of the best women the French-speaking stage have given us, combines to place her in a position alone in opera.

How she made her début at the

Opéra Comique by accident is too well known to repeat; but, had she not, results would have remained unaltered; in Paris the sense of the artistic is too strong to ignore genuine talent, no matter on what stage it may first show itself. In much they are satisfied with less there than in New York, but they differ from New York in an ultra-keenness to pronounce prophetically upon the new.

Miss Garden's first sensational appearance made a harder, not a smoother, way for her; future rôles alone would prove her right to any lasting worth. For these she had to await opportunities delayed by the success of "Louise," in which she débuted. Finally they came, each one strongly new and forceful in conception, until, ten years after her first arrival there, she had grown unassailably established; a matter of course in the Parisian art world, much as the Champs-Élysées is in its world of boulevards. It was her first American engagement that fused this acceptance into absolute fame. She had established herself in Paris as a notable artist, but through New York she grew to be a world celebrity.

Not that Paris cares greatly for New York opinion, except in instance of its singers who appreciate the salaries paid there. But Paris had sent us many singing idols which were returned with broken noses; we all remember them. Here, however, was the exception. Their other returning ones they valued, perhaps, none the less for New York's damagings; but they valued their completely triumphant one the more.

That move was the most dangerous one that Miss Garden will be called upon to make. She had progressed in Paris, firmly and securely, by her own standards, ones largely new in opera in New York, where she essayed still further risk by electing to appear in works by composers traditionally allied with failure there.

Content in the appreciation about her, with the true spirit of her Parisian adoption, she had given no thought to any world outside. Now and then, some stray item of her progress had found

its way here through the daily press, but of all those accredited to America, even passingly, her share of *réclame* was pitifully small.

"I suppose it is time that they should begin to know something about me," she said of this aspect, one day, at her home in the Rue Washington.

But the article that I wrote, still later, in a glow of enthusiasm for her "Aphrodite," went the rounds of the New York illustrated magazines, to be returned by editors to whom she was a stranger. Only after sixteen months or so, and just prior to her arrival, had sufficient suspicion of her existence been aroused to make it "timely."

From the moment that she alighted on the pier, Miss Garden appealed to that most difficult, yet quickest, class to interest, the newspaper men. Theirs was the keen joy of discovering a grateful subject, one of unusualness, personality, and peculiar picturesqueness. Sara Bernhardt and Calvé, in their halcyon days, were kindred thankful themes. But Miss Garden, on prolonged acquaintance, proved to differ from them both in type—when occasion arises, and she has something forcible, of personal interest to forcibly explain, she takes the whole world blandly into her frank confidence. And why not? Suffering silence may have done for the time of Isaac and Rebecca, but mankind in general has no leisure now to contemplate and then adjudicate. Neither are there, as in the *moyen âge*, knights to take up woman's cause and fight for it; instead, it is the survival of the sharpest in her own enlightened defense.

But the Scot is born claymore in hand, and frank refusal to be smitten on one cheek, and then to present the other, is, with him, an older possession than the appropriate material one upon his shield, the thistle. A certain hardness may result—all wounds leave scars—but in Miss Garden's case it seems to have taken the form of a full-blossomed independence, and of an ultra-willingness to fight, both on invitation and on principle.

Certain qualities in her art are just as surely Scotch as is she the embodi-

ment of centuries of Scotch love of music and the dance.

"Your dance in 'Salome' has Scotch traits," I said to her.

After a silence, she returned: "Now that I think of it, you are right."

Her insight into things remains uncolored by precedent or doubt. Her success in "Salome" evinced this.

"My friends thought I could not do the rôle; it was so different from all others I had done, but," she added curtly, "I did do it. Receipts from its performances last summer were the largest at the Paris Grand Opéra since its foundation. Richard Strauss told me that he did not think it possible for me to do the dance. 'If I cannot dance it, I shall not sing,' was my decision. Both were possible. It was simply this, something which he himself did not seem to grasp; the first half of the opera is hideously difficult, vocally, and in every way; the second is not equally tremendous in demands. The reserve strength equal to the first would sustain the second, and the dance."

So it became not simply an act of daring, but one of keen forethought.

Debussy's "Pelleas et Mélisande," without foothold of precedent to help scale its newness, she had approached, after insight, with the same clear confidence; the whistling, howling mob on that first night of its presentation was, to her, merely a superficial episode—she knew the music; they did not. It became a question only of whether they would stay quiet long enough to be schooled in its merits, as she had schooled herself. Had Wagner had such a champion on the first night of "Tannhäuser," at the Grand Opéra, Paris would have heard it in its entirety sooner.

It is not that Miss Garden undervalues the public; she looks on it merely as an individual, to be reasoned with as any other. As to Chicago, where she had a new public to convince into liking certain modern French works, just as she had convinced New York, she spoke with pleasure of the prospect of building up and proving the untried to be interesting.

"Massenet should be very grateful to you for doing for him in America what none could do before," I once said to her.

"He has not said so," she answered, quietly smiling. "But he has never sent me notes and photographs as he did all the rest, perhaps he *does* regard me differently."

The insight that applied to scores and audiences, apparently applied to other matters quite as lucidly.

Frankness she extends to her whole outlook on life. Bearing on the doubtful worth of an 'opera by a man of wealth, she said:

"People with money want to do what artists do; they think that money, because it buys material things, will also buy talent."

In some things, Miss Garden is mentally more like a man; the small, and, to the feminine mind, nettling, is overlooked; but to the larger, more intricate happenings she brings the keenness of perception that only woman knows; a man goes at a situation blindly, oftener unseeing of sophistry or complication back of it, and wastes half his fighting strength as outcome.

Yet Mary Garden is very feminine on the domestic side, generally a minor one with women celebrities. In her own words:

"I keep my accounts; pay my house-keeping bills every week, and see that they are correct, too; order meals, and have a good cook, who cooks everything—she *must*."

There was lightness, but conclusive decision in the "must."

The casual may have gained impression that she is without feeling for others. In one sense, they are right; toward self-excuse that condones the self-sparing in the little associations of her surrounding life, and in the larger ones, she is flint-hearted. That is the mental attitude of most people of unshrinking energy.

She herself indulges in no qualms as to things being impossible; neither mental toil nor bodily fatigue is to be considered. The last week of the last Manhattan season, she sang every day

in exacting rôles, with a journey to Philadelphia set between, and under stress of worry with which the public became duly acquainted—but later. In the moment of doing things in the hard routine of her art, she asks no sympathy; she has none for herself—they *must* be done, she does them.

As to whether Miss Garden has that quality which people term "heart," I should say that it evidences itself in her love of her art, and in that good Scotch clannish love of her family—and of "heart" very many noted artists have not as much, for very many liberally accredited with its possession have merely impulse, genuine at the moment, but not lasting overnight.

Impulse, in a way, she has abundantly; without it, she could not be an artist.

"There are people one can trust," some one remarked.

"Trust no one," she returned decisively.

Then, ten minutes later, she confided important projects far more wisely kept to herself.

Love of the beautiful amounts with her to a passion.

"I could not live without beautiful things, and I could not live with the ordinary about me," is her conclusion. "As a girl, I would get little, cheap objects in the Latin Quarter to help make my room more livable."

In her earlier stage career, at her home in the Rue Washington, with its drawing room in Empire style, she had already begun to collect. Her present salon in the Avenue Malakoff marks later prosperity by little change in furnishings. It is in art objects, gathered with perception and slow care, that there is addition—pictures by Watteau, an etching by Rembrandt, a carved head of John the Baptist, picked up at Bruges, a bust of Voltaire, a portrait of Napoleon, and a Venus of ancient Greece, desired by the British Museum. There is, too, a medieval statue of St. Elizabeth, of Hungary, with its lapful of legendary roses, and opposite it, on a corresponding pedestal, a Cupid, delightfully sculptured, obtrusively nude.

They recalled an eclectic taste and contrast quite as striking in the drawing-room mantel of a noted man where a pair of altar angels, found in Italy, knelt with clasped hands, and between the two a Venus. Both engaging instances of the slipped perspective with the ultramodern.

Balzac, Flaubert, and things relating to the history of her adopted country, make Miss Garden's reading; it is to a French country house she purposes to buy that she will go on her retirement. Preceding this, she has mapped out her career; first, rôles she has been asked to create in Paris, and delayed by present contracts; afterward, a course that will be new to her.

"Wagner I shall take up later," she said as a beginning; "that is why I study German every day, for I would never sing an opera except in its own language. I shall commence with *Elsa*, and there is only one tenor I would sing her with, Dalmorès. At forty-one or two, when my art is matured to its fullest, I shall take up *Isolde*."

"I have no favorite rôle, I am not so ordinary. I like everything on the stage while I am doing it, but perhaps *Mélicande* and *Salome* are nearest to me."

"Of all composers, Debussy is the strongest to my liking. I adore him, because *there* is the note of my epoch; *there* is the thing that is new; *there* is the composer of my time. Strauss is a continuation of Wagner and Berlioz, Debussy is himself. I am a woman of the twentieth century."

"There is nothing that I enjoy better than merely a gloriously placed voice, but it should be confined to the concert stage. To sit through 'Lucia' and such incruited things for one big aria—I should die!"

Miss Garden may have by some been figured as sitting with a work on psychology in one hand, and a new rôle in the other, trying to fit the profundity of the one into the complexities of the other, after the manner of a picture puzzle. Those who analyze her impersonations are able to point out the logical development and natural sequence

in her unfolding of episodes as they progress.

As to her real methods of conception, she simply says:

"When I have read a new rôle, it unfolds itself like the coil of a cinematograph. Its every picture I see in my mind. I memorize the whole thing together—music, words, and action. That first conception I never change, small details may vary from one performance to another, otherwise it is identical. If in a presentation I hit upon some new minor point, I carefully think it over off the stage; if it fits into my original plan as an improvement, I adopt it."

Madame Calvé once said to me of her interpretation of the rôle of *Anita* in "La Navarraise": "She doesn't act, she *docs* things." The truest, unintentionally humorous analysis she could have given as one reliant upon impulse. Maria Gay, whose single brief season here of "Carmen" removed her permanently to other stages, asked one night in London for her impressions of the part, answered with vague vacuous impressiveness: "*Carmen* was bad." Then, having exhausted the topic, added, whether in extenuation or defense I never learned: "All women are bad."

Behind Miss Garden's impersonations there is neither mere impulse nor accident; with calm, cold intelligence, she views a character as she would critically observe a picture, its strong points and its weak ones. Then, throwing her personality into it with splendid fervor, she makes living and human its frailties and its strength.

"I am always thinking of my work," she said one afternoon. "I am thinking of it even while I talk to you."

It did not mean a reasoning out of how the character in mind should be portrayed—that her vivid imagination had already grasped—but thought on some small detail which would help present her own understanding still more clearly to her audience.

Her keen observation of things about her likely plays a direct part only within limitations. One afternoon, at a circus in Châtres, the unaffected delight of a country audience, its joys in the

hackneyed, their quaint place as individuals in the picture, even the way in which a family umbrella was peculiarly held, made objects of enchantment that absorbed her. It seemed with her as with a writer; everything humanly commonplace was as valued as the most striking and picturesque, not with thought of any practical use, but sinking in unconsciously as part of that general resource which strengthens through suggestion things so distantly remote.

"A man who would interest me must interest me through his intellectuality. It is only for that that I would marry. Why should I marry for anything else? I have never had an ideal masculine. Men have never interested me greatly; few of them keep my illusions. There is an artist in the north of Europe," she went on in that ingenuous moment, "who comes once in so often to Paris to see me in some rôle at the Opéra. Each time he writes me his impressions, each time he sends me flowers, that great azalea bush there is from him. He has made no attempt to meet me; I have no desire to meet him. It is the easier way to keep illusions, one of the other."

"Does religion still play a great part in the twentieth century?" once brought as her answer:

"No, I think not. But each man and woman must have their own religion in their heart, a something which they may neither care to, nor can, put into words."

Certain things aside from vigorous vitality, make Miss Garden's hard life easier.

"Nervousness," in her belief, "is a pose. If one knows a thing well enough to do it, there is no anxiety in its doing. From the stage the audience before me is no more than the stones in the street; it does not exist. I mean this in the sense that my whole mind is on my work. I never realize anything but my rôle and the people on the stage. After it is over, I never dwell on the thing that is gone. Sometimes I am exhausted at the close of the opera, again fresh enough to repeat it from the start, but always my sleep is wonderful. That gives one great force.



AN important client was waiting when Alicia Edmonds called at my office. I let him wait, and saw her. Other friends have had to wait for Alicia since she was four and I was eighteen; and that is twenty years ago.

When she had talked of nothing in particular for five minutes—and talked of that rather absent-mindedly—I mentioned the client.

"Can you wait a few minutes, while I see about his business?" I asked.

"Mine is business, too," she stated.

"And what is the business?" I inquired smilingly. Business does not go with Alicia.

She drew on the floor with her parasol, and then she looked up at me suddenly. I gathered that she wanted to watch the effect of a surprise. There are not many of her ways that I do not know.

"I always promised that you should draw up my marriage settlements," she said.

I stroked my mustache for a moment. Hide the mouth and you hide the man!

"So that's it!" I observed.

"I—don't—know. You see, father and mother aren't here; and I always told you things, didn't I?" I nodded slowly. "If all the advice you've given me were one advice, what a big advice it would be! When I was a little dot, you used to wrap it up in fairy stories. Do you remember the one about the ogre and the little princess?"

"I remember," I agreed.

If there is any story in my life that I remember it is that.

"He promised not to eat the little girl, if she was good; and she *was* good. Or he pretended that she was? So he didn't eat her; and she grew up, and married a prince."

"Yes. Yes. Who is the prince, Alicia?"

"He isn't the prince. That's the difficulty. I don't know whether to marry him—George Royston."

"George Royston!" I stroked my mustache again. I could have sworn that he was in love with Minnie Chalmers. That Minnie was in love with him required no evidence on oath. "He is a good fellow; one of the best."

"Yes. He is that."

"He has proposed to you?"

"Last night; at the Carters' garden party. He took me by surprise."

"And you said——"

"That he should have an answer this evening."

I shook my head.

"Love never waits!"

"Doesn't it? I've often wondered. I don't pretend that I love him."

"Then why didn't you refuse him off-hand?"

"He was so hard to refuse. He said—I can't tell you that, of course. It seemed like plunging a knife into him. I was trying to find the kindest words, and then—he seized my hands and begged me to think if I couldn't give him a chance, because I 'spelt life to

him,' he said. Well, I've come to four and twenty; and I haven't 'spelt life' to any one else. He is a dear, good boy. I like him better than anybody who—who has proposed to me, or who is likely to. Why shouldn't I make him happy, I thought. Why *shouldn't* I, Dick? It would be very suitable."

"Very suitable," I agreed. They were both young, and good, and handsome, and brave. "Very suitable, if you loved him."

"Perhaps——"

"Tush! If you did, you wouldn't consult—your legal adviser."

She dropped the parasol, picked it up, dropped it again. I handed it to her. She snatched it.

"I didn't think you had *quite* shriveled into a lawyer!" she cried. "I thought of the times when I broke my toys and cried, and you—I won't trouble you any more, Mr. Legal Adviser. There's nothing about love in your books." She jumped up and walked over to my shelves. "'Jones on Torts!' 'Boyd on Contracts!' 'Smith's Conveyancing!' 'Thompson on Patent Law!' 'The Doctrine of Consideration!' Nothing about a girl who 'spells life' to a man! Or a girl who waited for a prince, and grew old, and ugly, and stupid! But 'love doesn't wait'!"

"Sometimes it does," I told her.

And sometimes it just stands by. One is not always the prince for his loved one.

"*You* would!" she cried. "Well, you've waited till you're old and ugly—but you always were!—and foolish, and — *Where's your princess?* You've been horrid and hateful, and—I'm going!"

The door closed, and my princess went. I saw my client, and advised him about a right of way—with the help of "Robinson on Easements." When he had gone, I sat with the law book opened before me, and felt that I had closed the great book of life. Not quite. To-morrow my princess would come and say that she had been rude, and she was very sorry, and perhaps I should kiss her. I kissed her about four times a year, and reckoned up those

times as the spelling of life. Her birthday and mine; Christmas morning under the mistletoe; her annual quarrel with me. I never quarreled with her!

I sat thinking it all over. I had influence over her. Should I go round to Mrs. Carter's, where she was staying, and tell her that she must not marry for compassion? I decided that the advice was unnecessary. She would not marry for compassion, unless the compassion was tinged with love. If there was a little seed of love it would grow. How those little seeds do! She could not love a better fellow than Royston. And he loved her.

And I—well, I had always known that something of the kind would happen. Perhaps it was best for everybody, except Minnie Chalmers. Poor little Minnie! It was hard on her. Royston *had* paid her attentions before Alicia came to our town to stay. They had been sweethearts since they were babies, and every one understood that George only waited till he had made his way; and he was doing that quickly. It was very hard on little Minnie.

My princess was very tender. If I told her about Minnie? But Royston loved Alicia now; and I more than half suspected that she loved him. It was the happiness of two against the happiness of one. What was the use of making arithmetic of it? I only reckoned one of them. Still, I *was* sorry for Minnie.

My clerk broke my reflections. Miss Chalmers wished to see me, he said. I told him to show her in.

I had often thought that Minnie was another expression of Alicia. Their height, hair, voices, even their features, were alike. The same written description would answer for either; and yet they were so different. Minnie was Alicia sobered, and Alicia was Minnie quickened. No two good girls could well have been more unlike in expression or in disposition.

"What is the trouble, my dear girl?" I asked. For it was plainly trouble that brought her. She was pale, and she had been crying. She cried now, but without tears.

"When father died," she said, "he told me if ever I was in great trouble, I must come to you. Perhaps I should have come, anyhow, because—people always do come to you. I trust you so much; and I think we are good friends."

"Yes, my dear."

"May I tell you?"

"Yes, Minnie," I said. "Yes."

"I met George this morning," she began. "I mean George Royston, of course. There was never any one else to me. I don't care who knows. I am not ashamed of loving him. He looked at me in a strange way. He half stopped and half didn't, and—I had thought for a long time that he was nervous about saying something to me, and—I just smiled at him; and he stopped, and—and he asked: 'Is that my answer, Min?' I looked surprised, I suppose; and he looked so reproachful. 'Don't pretend you don't know what I mean, Min,' he begged. And I said: 'I wouldn't pretend to you, George; but I don't!' He stared and stared, and then he made a sound like a groan. I said—I needn't tell you. But I will! I said: 'If you are in trouble, George, you can rely on me in anything; *everything!*' And then he said: 'Oh, Minnie, darling! I asked some one to marry me last night. It was in the dark, in the shrubbery. I thought it was you! There never could be any one else. Don't you know?' I said I knew. I always did. When we were little, we— Now, he has asked some one else to marry him. He is to have her answer to-night. We can't guess who she is, even. What are we to do, if she says 'yes,' I don't know. He doesn't know. Well, we do, I suppose. She'll have told her people. He *can't* shame her by saying that he doesn't care for her. I always thought I was a good girl, and would die rather than be mean or dishonorable. Now, I don't know. But I do know this: I would sooner die than George should be anything than the gentleman that he is. Can't you see any way? You are so good and so clever. And—lawyers know how to do things."

I gazed at my shelves helplessly, and thought how Alicia had contrasted law with life.

"Have you any suspicion as to the lady?" I asked. She shook her head.

"It was very dark," she explained. "You see, George saw me walk into the shrubbery, and rushed in, and made the mistake. He says I looked over my shoulder at him, and—I *did* wait at the other side in case he should come."

"It must have been some one rather like you," I suggested. I was anxious to know if they suspected that it might be Alicia.

"I don't know. It was very dark in the shrubbery. There is only one girl here really like me; but—I mean Alicia, of course. *She* would have refused him. It couldn't have been Alicia."

"No," I said. "No, I suppose not."

"I'm sure not." Minnie smiled faintly for a moment. "I wish it were. I'd go to her myself and tell her the truth. I could trust *her*. Can't you do *anything?*" She shivered with anxiety.

"I'll make inquiries and see," I said. "Of course, if one could find out the lady— She isn't very deeply in love presumably, or she would have answered at once. I might find some way of arranging matters without hurting her feelings too much. She would prefer a little hurt to marrying a man who loved some one else, possibly. Anyhow, I'll make inquiries at once, and see what I can do. Don't worry more than you can help. It isn't such a bad world; and things have a knack of coming right. There, there! Don't cry. I'll do my best."

I put on my hat and went to Alicia. I found her alone in Mrs. Carter's drawing room. She was playing a child's piece that I taught her when she was thirteen. I called it "The Ogre's March." It seemed funny that she should choose that. She is far beyond my teaching now; indeed, a very accomplished pianist.

"Well," I said, "here is the ogre."

I stamped on the floor, as I used to tramp to the march. Sometimes I used to pull her pigtail in time to the tramping.

She jumped up, and held out both hands.

"I was working myself up to come and be forgiven," she declared. "You mustn't think I don't appreciate my old ogre, because I do."

"God bless you, dear! Al, you mustn't do it. Love is your birthright. Wait for the prince. You must write and say 'No.'"

She tore her hands from mine, and flung herself on the sofa, with her face on the cushions.

"I've written," she cried; "and I've posted it. I said 'Yes.'"

"Alicia!"

"I've done more," she owned desperately. "I thought I might as well be thorough, and make him happy. I've said that—that I cared. There's no altering it." She turned round and faced me. Her face was white, and her eyes were unnaturally bright. "And why should I?" she demanded. "He wants me. No one else does. Why shouldn't I marry him? He's easy to like. Why *shouldn't* I?"

"I will tell you, Al. You must be a brave girl, and hear me out."

I sat down and told her what Minnie had told me. She gasped once or twice, but did not speak.

"Sometimes," I concluded, "the knife hurts the surgeon. If I thought that I was hurting *you*—there has not been a time these many years that I would not have given my all to prevent that. But, as you do not really care for him—you made that quite plain to me."

"Yes," she cried quickly. "Did I? Oh, yes!"

She laughed curiously. My heart ached for her. I felt sure now that she cared, but the pretense was best.

"As you do not care for him," I repeated, "you will be glad that I have told you."

"What else could you do?" she asked.

"I could do anything that was for your good," I said. "And other people's good wouldn't reckon much. But I should have told you, anyhow, even if I had believed that you loved him. Of course I know that you didn't. You

would have wished it, and you wouldn't have hated the surgeon, I hope."

She shook her head.

"Twenty years' friend!" she said. "I could never hate you. Never! Ah, no!"

"Thank you, Alicia. You haven't told Mrs. Carter, or any one, I hope?"

"No. I told Mrs. Carter that I had a proposal last night, and had to answer to-day. I didn't tell her who it was; and she was out when I wrote. George Royston won't tell. I don't think Minnie will. Anyhow, it won't matter. Will you go and tell him? And then take me home. This afternoon, Dick! I want to go home! You don't understand. I'm not grieving for him. It's only—perhaps he'll believe that I *did* care. You see, I meant to make myself, and I wrote that I did. I didn't—didn't—*didn't*!"

She almost screamed.

"No, dear," I agreed. "Of course not. But I'm not going to tell him. I am going to see him before he opens the letter, and get it back. He doesn't know that it was you, and he never shall."

"Oh, Dick!" she cried. "Oh! You good old Dick! If you bring it back unopened, I—I shall hug you, I do believe!"

I watched for the postman, and arrived at Royston's door just as he did. I took the letter from him, and put it in my pocket. Then I went to George's room.

"Minnie has been to me," I said, "and told me all about it. I found out the lady, and I have seen her. She had written to you. I haven't seen the letter, but she told me that, though she has the highest opinion of you, she cannot say that she loves you. So I suppose she said—well, you don't care, you lucky young dog!"

"God bless you!" he cried. "What a good chap you are!" He laughed with relief. "No, I don't care. I'll send her the letter back unopened, if she likes."

"She would like," I told him. "I met the postman at the door, and I've pocketed the letter with that idea. You

see, she'd naturally prefer that you didn't know her name. I'll give it back to her, shall I?"

"Thanks!" he said. "Thanks! Tell her, please, that I shall always remember an unknown lady very kindly, and that I wish her every happiness. The queer thing is that I haven't the least idea who it is. She was in a dark corner. I suppose she saw me as I came in under the arch. There were fairy lights on it. She must have been rather startled. You see, I didn't wait long. I was frightfully upset that Minnie seemed to hesitate about it. Blessed little Minnie! Now, I'll go to——" He laughed with sheer happiness. It is fine to hear a good chap laugh like that! "To claim my kingdom!" he cried. "Oh! My precious little Min! Funny her coming to you! Not funny at all really. We all think you're the best chap in the place. I say! I was glad when I saw Miss Edmonds!"

I stared at him.

"You know," he apologized, "a fellow in love's an awful ass. I used to think that—well, you were always jolly nice to Min, and—I was glad to find it was only because she was like some one else. You were the only chap I ever thought might cut me out!"

"You young donkey!" I said. "Why, she's a baby to me!"

"She's as old as Miss Edmonds," he retorted, with a chuckle. "I'm not blind, you know!"

"Neither am I," I said. "I am an old man to either of them, and there's no likelihood of—well, off you go to your Minnie. Tell her I said you were to kiss her for me!"

He actually ran to execute my commission, and I went to Alicia.

She was still in the drawing room, and she was playing another childish piece. It was the one that the ogre made the little girl learn because she threw snowballs at the postman.

I gave her the letter, and patted her shoulder.

"Put it in the fire," I commanded. "Princess! Some day the real prince will come, as he did in the story."

"Yes, ogre."

She put the letter in the fire, and linked her arm through mine, and watched it burn; and when the last little flame puffed out she laughed a queer little laugh.

"Ogre!" she said. "You don't understand your princess! You're wasting a deal of good pity. I didn't love him a bit."

I turned her face round with my hand, and scrutinized it.

"No," I pronounced. "You didn't! Why on earth did you accept him, Alicia?"

"The princess always did mad things when she got in a temper," she explained. "That was the ogre's great trouble, if you remember. He didn't half understand her. I often think that the story—— But it was a very nice story. I used to lie in bed and look at the stars, and wonder why they winked, and about the prince."

"Yes, princess," I said. "Yes?"

She held my arm closer.

"Sometimes I used to wonder about the ogre, too. I thought—when I was a very little girl, I mean—sometimes I thought that the ogre loved the little girl best."

"In the way of ogres," I said, "he loved the little girl very much—very much."

"What," she asked; "is the way of ogres? I mean—ogres who *do* like little girls and don't eat them on buttered toast? Ogres who are—lawyer ogres? And are good to a little girl all her life, and—— Do they ever love like a prince? A prince who comes courting the princess? And if they do, *don't they ever tell the princess?*"

She looked at me for just the fraction of a second, and I gave her a year's kisses. One—two—three—four!

"Princess!" I cried. "You spell life to me! Princess!"



WHO EVER LOVED BY FANNIE HEASLIP LEA



STEVENS, when the hour of the eleventh dance came about, wearied of the general herd and betook himself to solitude and a cigarette in a corner of the Leroux's wide veranda. There he drew himself up to a seat upon the railing, prepared to philosophize upon the emptiness of dances in general, the present moment in especial.

It was a night of black velvet and star dust. Along the grass a little wind whispered lazily, and from somewhere in the darkness drifted the fragrance of jasmine, unbearably sweet. Within the ballroom white shoulders moved like rose petals upon a darker tide. The music yearned in a languorous succession of cadences, and the faint slip-slip of dancing feet went on, unresting, like waves upon a windless shore.

"*Car-r-ramba!*" said Stevens softly, because the match, too absently considered, burned his fingers.

He had been six years down on the Isthmus, engineering, and had recourse in moments of forgetfulness to a vocabulary thereby enriched.

At the sound, a slender figure, that had been inconspicuously lounging among the cushions of a dark settee, rose and came forward slowly.

"I beg your pardon," said the figure, and Stevens, slipping from the railing, perceived that it was a girl; a rather tall girl, in some sort of a white, soft gown that swished pleasantly about her ankles, and came demurely close to throat and wrists.

"I suppose you didn't know that any

one else was here," she added, after a fashion impersonally frank.

"Well, rather not!" he cried hurriedly. "I hope you'll forgive me. I didn't see——"

"What *was* it you said?" she inquired, with a startling effect of coming to the real point, and more than a shade of curiosity.

Stevens hung fire.

"Why, it's a form of Spanish profanity. You wouldn't be interested—it may mean almost anything."

"Like *Mon Dieu* when you meet it in French classes?"

"Exactly. Anything from—well, from really rotten profanity to—fudge!"

"Which did *you* mean?" she deduced quickly; then laughed outright. "I beg your pardon. Don't tell me, of course. I shouldn't have asked."

"I meant," he told her gravely, "the very worst kind. Burned my finger."

"Oh!" she accepted. She would have passed him, then, with a friendly little nod of her dark head, but he put out a protesting hand.

"Oh, please! Don't go! If I've disturbed you——"

"I was only looking on a bit," she explained pleasantly. "Really, I was going, in just a moment anyhow. Don't be distressed."

Stevens smiled. He had a very pleasing smile that included white teeth in a brown face, straightforward, keen gray eyes, and a conquering cleft in his chin.

"Seems to me," he suggested, "I

ought to know you. It's too dark to see, out here, but there's something in your voice— Will you say 'really' again, if you don't mind?"

She laughed, with a vanishing note of satisfaction. "Really," she repeated, in due carefulness. "Real-ly, really!"

"The little drag on the first syllable," Stevens mused thoughtfully. "It's like something I haven't heard in a long time. Do I know you?"

At that she matched frankness with frankness, rounding upon him smilingly, arms folded in an impulsive gesture peculiarly her own.

"I'm Nina Leroux. I knew you the moment you came out."

"Ni-na Le-roux!" echoed Stevens incredulously. "Ni-na! Well, of all things! Upon my word! Why—you're nothing but a kid!"

"I'm nineteen," she reproved him.

"Will you condescend to shake hands with me?" he suggested humbly. "Nineteen! I don't believe you. What have you done to yourself? Been and gone and grown up, haven't you? Well, I'll be hanged!"

Nina's cool, slim hand grew restless suddenly within his eager hold.

"Why, you know," she protested. "I had to grow up some time. You're twenty-seven yourself, aren't you?"

"The last time I saw you"—he thrust vaguely about among clustering memories—"you—let me see—you—"

"I fell off the wharf, in a storm," she supplied, "and you fished me out." There was an undercurrent of earnestness in her tone. "Saved my life, like a storybook hero."

"All legs and arms you were," he put in hurriedly, with an embarrassed laugh; "hair sticking to your little white face like a drowned rat. Jove! I remember!"

Then he took her arm and turned her friendly-wise to face the light, a window away.

"Let's have a look at you. Nineteen, eh? I'll bet it's the same old Nina, though."

She returned his look not quite calmly. An exquisite red flamed up beneath her clear, dark skin. The soft

lips set in a line of determination, but a delicate quiver betrayed their shaken poise. When she lifted one hand in a little defiant movement to put back her straight dark hair, something caught strangely in Stevens' breathing processes. The line of her throat was beauty's self, her eyes more strangely luring than the sea.

"No," he said slowly, his voice showing all at once the merest perceptible husk. "No—you are not the same."

"I've changed?"

"You've become most ungodly beautiful," he said simply.

Naturally a silence followed. She spoke first, laughing in a slight constraint.

"I really must have changed, then."

"You're a wonder," said Stevens. He added musingly: "Nineteen, eh? How is it you're not on view in there—smashing hearts and all that? Don't care for the madding crowd? Have you become a young woman with advanced views? Suffragette? I won't believe it."

"You forget," she offered coolly, "that there are Elsa, and Mary, and Jeanne. Three Misses Leroux before the public eye are quite enough. My coming out is indefinitely postponed. Last year it was thought of, but Elsa didn't—well, she *didn't*—that's all. If you see what I mean."

"She was engaged?"

"He lost his money in cotton."

"I see," said Stevens thoughtfully. He whistled a vague bar or two, eyebrows lifting in the dark. "Good reason for throwing him over."

"Love in a cottage is a luxury—they couldn't afford it."

"I see," said Stevens again, more slowly. "And Mary?"

"Mary's a good sort," the girl admitted carelessly, "but she doesn't seem to take. The only thing for her would be marriage-from-force-of-habit—a boy-and-girl affair solidified. She never had one."

"Jeanne's a mighty pretty girl."

"Too pretty. It frightens the men away to think of paying for her proper setting. You see?"

Stevens folded his arms, frowning a little.

"I see," he commented, "that you're a lot too wise for a *jeune fille*. Cynical, aren't you? Is it real, Nina?"

"Oh, yes," she said instantly, "it's real. Like my hair—and my color—it's my own. Did you think I was trying to impress you with my worldly wisdom?"

It was so nearly what he had thought that Stevens grinned reluctantly.

"Cynicism," he observed, "is very young. I've been there."

"And come back. Well, I haven't started home yet."

"It's a pretty nice world, to my thinking."

"For those who like that sort of thing," she quoted swiftly, "'it's just the sort of thing you'd think they'd like!'"

"Oh, come now!" said Stevens. "You used to be a better sport than that, Nina. D'you mean to tell me you honestly see things that way? Only thing for a girl to do—to get married. Nothing in life but sawdust and ashes. Don't you believe in—well, in work—and success—and love—all that sort of thing?"

"All that sort of thing," she mocked, with a wistful little laugh. "Of course not, but I'd give my soul to. Do you?"

"You bet I do," said Stevens tersely. "What else d'you think makes living worth while?"

"I don't know," she considered, "I don't know. Of course, there's out of doors, and books, and the sea—all *that's* worth while. But people—people rather spoil it to me."

"You're a little Pharisee," said Stevens.

"I am *not*," she contradicted hotly. "I don't say I'm any better. I'm *worse* because I feel that way about the whole silly show, and yet I'll do exactly what everybody else is doing. I'll come out—as soon as there's room for me—I'll wrench every nerve in my body to be a success; and I'll marry the most eligible man that asks me, after having done my best to *make* him ask me—whether I care for him or not—because then I'll have justified the money that's been

spent on me. I'll be a success in my line, and my line's the one I've got to walk on."

"I see," said Stevens. "Rotten luck!"

"You're laughing at me," she accused suddenly. "I don't know why I'm talking like this to you. It's quite absurd. You can't possibly be interested in my personal points of view."

"We're pretty old friends," he reminded her gravely. "I fished you out of deep water once, didn't I?"

She nodded and laughed, a little recklessly.

"Since I'm grown up it's nothing but shallows. No need of fishing me out."

"I might steer you deeper in."

"I wish you could." She put out her hand again, with a quick, gracious movement. "I'm keeping you away from the dancing. You've been out of things so long, it isn't fair—"

"I've been out of things so long a little longer looks good to me. What are you going to do?"

She started at the direct question, then shrugged smilingly.

"I? Oh, I was going for a run in the car. Just a bit up the road. I often do, at night. It's down at the gate."

"By yourself?"

"Why, I drive," she admitted, a little slowly, "but I take Michael along—the chauffeur. He's quite sufficient chaperon, if that's what you mean."

"It was not what I meant," said Stevens. "I've been out of things, as you say, for so long, that my first conscious thought on every occasion is *not* a chaperon. I was wondering why you didn't ask *me* to go."

"You!" she said hurriedly. "Why, would you care? You'd miss some of your dances."

Stevens smiled.

"I'll take a chance. That is, if you want me along."

"I'd like it enormously."

"You mean it?" he conditioned.

"But, of *course*!" she insisted happily.

He followed her down the veranda, and lightly down the path to the gate.

A large figure rose alertly from the dusk of the panting car.

"Have you been waiting long, Michael?" asked the girl kindly.

"No time at all, Miss Nina," returned a tenor brogue.

"I might take Michael's place," suggested Stevens.

"Oh!" she murmured. She dismissed the chauffeur with a word of friendly explanation.

"Michael is awfully loyal to me," she commented, at the first turn in the white road. "If I kept him waiting an hour, I believe he'd say 'No time at all, Miss Nina!'"

Her hair blown back by the wind released a faint, intangible fragrance, more a sense of exquisite cleanliness than a perfume. She turned her face for one darting moment, pale in the shadow.

"Do you like this? Are we going fast enough?"

"You drive like a man."

Her lithe hands, ungauntleted, showed strong and still upon the wheel.

"I love it," she flung at him briefly.

"Then you do believe in love," said Stevens.

The rush of air upon their faces grew sharper. The car leaped ahead at a higher speed.

"That sort of love," she granted, in full flight.

"Good work!" said Stevens. "Shows you're not hopeless."

She made him no answer. Presently she slowed to a pace permitting of conversation.

"Please don't make fun of me," she said, her eyes on the road where the twin shafts of the car's lights played searchingly. "I didn't mean you to think I was that sort of a silly school-girl. The misunderstood woman is not a rôle I care for. You've been working hard at big things, and winning out, so perhaps you don't quite see what it is I'm discontented with. I want a chance at life; and instead I'm going to have a speaking part in a polite comedy."

"How do you know what I've been doing?" he demanded.

"I've asked," she confessed, "sometimes. And I read things about the Isthmus."

"It is big work. Suppose," he probed directly, "I hadn't happened out on the porch to-night, I shouldn't have met you?"

"Look out!" she warned. "There's a low branch! Oh, sooner or later, perhaps."

"You weren't sufficiently interested, then, to make it sooner."

"Why, you didn't remember me at all. Isn't that rather exacting?"

"You were thirteen," said Stevens, "the last time I saw you. It's not an impressive age, Nina."

"No," she agreed, "but it's impressive. Shall I speed up again?"

"Wait a bit," he commanded, "we want to talk. So you *were* interested enough to ask about me?"

"Sometimes."

"I'm honored," he said gravely.

"You're making fun of me."

"Not in the very least. You see, I hadn't much time for girls down there; and the girls I knew up here had plenty of time to forget me. I've been working like mad the last six years. Not much girl in it, one way or the other. This is my first holiday."

"And how does it look to you?"

"I dare say I've grown away from polite society."

"A-ah!" she exulted.

On one side of them the beach fled by, silent and mysterious; on the other, dark lawns, clustered trees, and houses vaguely looming in the dark. After a little these gave way to empty stretches, and the crooning of the pines.

"Do you like this?" she asked over her shoulder.

"I'd rather talk to you," said Stevens.

She slowed again at once.

"Ah, well!" she said. "Isn't it big and dark out here? You can draw a free breath. I suppose I shall get used to things, and not make such an unlovely row—after a while. I don't talk about it, commonly. Somehow, with you," she finished rather hurriedly, "I knew you so long ago——"

"Does that make the difference?" asked Stevens.

"Why, what——"

"I'd like to think," he insisted stubbornly, "that you'd have felt at home with me if you'd never heard of me before."

"But that's too incredible."

"Is it?"

"It wouldn't be natural."

"Why not?"

"All the conventionalities——"

"I'm afraid," said Stevens, "that I've grown a bit rusty on the conventionalities. You see, when you're working and fighting, away from pink teas and all that, the conventionalities don't count a whole lot."

"I wonder," she considered gravely, "if they really count a whole lot—anywhere?"

"They were made," he suggested, "for bad people, and stupid people; and the other people, like you and me, think they have to stand for them. Have you decided?"

She threw him a startled look.

"Decided what?"

"That it doesn't make any difference—my having known you all your life?"

"Why—I dare say. Do you mean we should have found each other, anyhow—been friends?"

"Is that all you think I mean?"

"What else?" she parried a little nervously.

"Think!" said Stevens briefly, and laid his hand over one of hers upon the wheel. The result, expressed in terms of her quickened pulses, nearly ditched them.

"Take your hand away!" she cried sharply.

"It startled you, did it?"

"That's a dangerous thing to do."

Stevens smiled, the lines of his chin and jaw setting strongly in the dark.

"Even more dangerous than you suppose."

"You might have made me run into a tree."

"I can't see," he argued coolly, "why the hand of a man you've known all your life just touching yours in a friendly sort of way——"

She tried to laugh it off.

"You never thought of touching my hand before. I dare say it used to be frightfully grubby. You hardly noticed me at all. You were Jeanne's friend—remember? You used to give me candy to run and play."

"That is what I said," he agreed, undisturbed; "it's just as if I'd never known you at all. You came out of the dark like a dream girl to-night. Do you think I'm crazy?"

"I think you're making fun of me," she said bravely. "Shall we turn here?"

"Isn't there a bridge a little farther on?" he objected. "Listen, Nina. I told you there hadn't been a girl for me in the last six years. Do you believe in love at first sight?"

She bestowed an engrossed attention upon the wheel, her face slightly averted from the directness of his look.

"I'd like to. I'd like to believe in lots of things—romance and adventure and all that—but I can't."

"Romance?" he repeated. "And adventure? I could give you those, fill your two hands with 'em. You haven't answered my question."

"Well, no!" she said defiantly, "I don't. First sight, or last sight. I don't believe in it at all. Do—do you?"

"I've always believed in love," he said, "whenever I stopped to think about it. And now I believe in love at first sight."

"Ah!" she sighed, ever so little unsteadily. "You're very lucky."

"So are you. You've inspired the belief."

She sat straighter, suddenly letting the car out in a leaping rush.

"I'm disappointed," she observed, in carefully detached phrases. "You're like all the rest. You flirt very prettily. I might have known it."

"Can't you tell the difference?" asked Stevens grimly.

"There is no difference."

"Then it's high time you learned," he retorted.

"I think I'll turn here," she said coldly.

She tightened both hands upon the wheel, but in the moment of her de-

cision a bulky shadow detached itself from apparent connection with a pine tree, and shambled across the road in front of the car.

"Pull up your brake!" cried Stevens sharply. But if Nina heard him, her already startled nerves were in too great confusion to heed the command. She swerved strongly to the left, in which direction there was apparently least probability of the cow's proceeding, and there was presently a grinding sound as the car removed with more or less accuracy some half dozen pickets of a weather-beaten fence. Followed a sickening impact, a crash like doomsday in little, and a shuddering stop, through which the glass of the shattered wind shield rained down in a shrill, harsh tinkle.

"Are you hurt?" asked Stevens hoarsely. He asked it three times without an answer.

Upon the fourth asking, Nina lifted her head from the jealous shelter of his arm, and turned. She tried to thrust him from her with one shaking hand.

"I'm not hurt," she breathed. "I'm all right. Let me go, please."

"You're not cut?" he repeated, with an incredulous anxiety.

"I'm all right."

"Nina! You're not hurt at all?"

"Let me go, please!" she implored him.

Without warning Stevens caught her back against his shoulder; with his other arm he prisoned her closely, and in the dark he stooped his cheek to hers that flamed suddenly beneath it. Under his breath he said her name, over and over like a spell—only that.

"Let me go," she begged. "Please! Allick!"

"Do you want to go?" he asked unsteadily. "Nina, do you dare to be honest about it? It's just you and me, and the truth, now. Do you want to go?"

She struggled in his arms.

"You can't possibly——" she denied, panting.

"But I do!" he exulted. "And you

know I do! You've got to believe me. Nina, do you want me to let you go?"

She struggled more faintly.

"If you want me to," said Stevens simply, "I will."

And at that she leaned very still against him, hiding her face upon the shoulder of his coat.

He stooped till his lips touched her burning ear.

"You do believe in love at first sight?" he said—very low.

The bent head moved slightly.

"Nina! Do you want to take a chance with me, on romance, and adventure, and the rest?"

Again that delicate affirmation.

Stevens tightened his arms about her shoulders. His strong, sunburned face whitened a little, with the emotion that comes to some men once in a lifetime—to more men not at all.

"Nina!" he said softly.

There were asking and longing and command in his shaken voice. Something in the girl's exquisite self-consciousness interpreted for him. She lifted her face, dark lashes sinking over eyes that saw a new light; and, blinded, himself, with the great, clean passion of youth, he found her lips.

When he released her their hands still clung together. The night hung vast, and silent, and mysterious around them.

"It's a fool question," he said at last, "but just when did you begin to care?"

"You'll laugh," she objected.

"No, give you my word."

"Then, the day you fished me out of the water. Oh, Allick, please!"

"But you didn't believe——"

"You don't believe in dreams; you just keep them tucked away in your heart."

"I see!" he accepted tenderly. And to a certain extent he *did* see, being clean of soul and clear of vision. "But it isn't like that with me; it's been like a whirlwind, or a big fire. Nina! Nina! Nina! You and I together, and the whole world to live in! Are you happy?"

"Happy!" she echoed breathlessly. With that, however, her foot spurned

a bit of broken glass, and the faint, tinkling sound recalled realities.

Whereupon they set about ascertaining the damages, having remembered them for the first time, and Stevens summed up briefly:

"Wind shield smashed—one mud guard twisted—fender bent—and left Prestolyte gone to glory. How's your steering gear?"

She turned the wheel experimentally.

"Seems to be all right."

"Then I reckon," he decided, climbing into the car beside her, "that we'd better go home. It may be late."

"I haven't the least idea," she murmured happily, backing into the road.

"And I forgot my watch," said Stevens.

They made the run in something more than decent time. The chill salt wind beat hard upon their glowing faces, and the wide, caressing dark leaned near to them. Once he bent longingly to put his lips to her cheek, and once she swayed toward him, laughing, so that a strand of her dark hair whipped across his eyes. When they drew up at the gate of the Leroux cottage they had their first premonition of disaster.

"Lights out! Lord!" said Stevens blankly.

"One in the hall," she supplemented. "Heavens! Do you suppose——"

They went up the walk, hand in hand.

"We can't have been so long," she protested uneasily.

"What do we care?" comforted Stevens, and held her back to kiss her once again, passionately, in the penultimate shadow.

From the semigloom of the hallway, Mrs. Leroux, a matron in Gaul, white-gowned, white-haired, and stony-faced, rose slowly to meet them. Behind her, from various attitudes of weariness, rose Elsa, Mary, and Jeanne. Elsa stifled a yawn, and a look of languid disapproval, behind a spangled fan.

"Well?" inquired Mrs. Leroux, with frozen courtesy.

"Really, mother," began Nina bravely, but Stevens put her gently aside.

"We seem to be a bit late," he remarked friendly fashion. "I'm sorry, Mrs. Leroux."

"I think," Mrs. Leroux assured him icily, "that it is only half-past one. Every one has been gone since one."

"I should have fancied," said Stevens, "it would be later. We had an accident to the car. I'm not so good a driver as I thought, apparently. Too bad to have kept you waiting up like this."

"It really doesn't matter," suggested Jeanne good-naturedly. She smiled, twisting her pretty mouth in a frankly widening yawn.

"On the contrary," coldly denied her mother, "it matters a great deal. If Nina is utterly careless as to what people may say of her, I am not—I——"

The quick blood spread to Stevens' temples.

"Pardon!" he interrupted grimly. "Nina is not careless, and neither am I. We should have preferred to announce our engagement less precipitately, but——"

"Engagement!" repeated Nina's mother. She swept her daughter with an amazed yet relenting eye.

The three sisters chorused delicately a well-bred amazement.

"It's quite absurd! You haven't seen each other in six years, until to-night. I can hardly believe——" Mrs. Leroux temporized to a diplomatic surrender. Deftly, in her mind, she eliminated Stevens as a cherished possibility for pretty Jeanne. "My dear Alick, it isn't as if you were a stranger. But——why, Nina isn't even 'out' yet!"

"Thank God!" said Nina quite unexpectedly.

From the tail of his eye, Stevens flung her a look of understanding and breath-taking reassurance.

"I think we can overlook that," he said gravely, "all things considered. Then we have your approval?"

"Why, it's too incredible!" sighed the matron, now completely thawed. "We must wait—we shall see."

But, later—or sooner—it was not she who saw.

The divine madness is only in the eye of Youth, the Beholder.



PLAYS AND PLAYERS

A FIRST NIGHTER

Charles Klein's new drama, "The Gamblers," is powerful, and a fine company acts it splendidly. "The Cub," by Thompson Buchanan, an amusing satire of Kentucky mountain feuds. Fred Terry and Julia Neilson bring their flamboyant English book play, "The Scarlet Pimpernel"

IT has been a lean month so far as successful plays are concerned, but of quantity there has been no shortage.

As I pointed out to readers of this magazine some time ago, competition in theatricals has grown so keen that the managers are hard put to it to keep the public interested, and in respect to plays it is again a case of the many called and the few chosen.

Half a dozen popular successes continue to be prosperous, but of a dozen plays produced since last I wrote not more than three or four will be on view when these pages reach the reader.

Of these Mr. Charles Klein's latest work, "The Gamblers," promises to enjoy prolonged popularity. Whether this play will duplicate the success of "The Music Master" and "The Lion and the Mouse" is a matter that may not be determined actually for some time to come. But first-night enthusiasm, which in this case was obviously of the genuine sort, and a steady demand for tickets since, would seem to indicate exceptional success.

In "The Gamblers" Mr. Klein again demonstrates the fact that he is a close observer of affairs. The play has been inspired apparently by the Morse case, for it deals with circumstances not un-

like those which led to that gentleman's incarceration. Here Mr. Klein, refusing to compromise the probabilities, allows his hero to go to jail to fulfill the sentence of the court. Before this happens, however, you have had assurance of a happy sentimental conclusion to the complications, and this serves to soften the sad indictment.

Wilbur Emerson, a young banker, has been intrusted by his father with the management of the affairs of a chain of banks, struggling against what he regards as the unfair competition of various larger banking institutions. Unknown to his father, but in agreement with the other directors, he had borrowed on his company's own capital, and at the outset of the play the fact is discovered that the notes, through the treachery of one of the directors, have come into the hands of *James Darwin*, the district attorney, and a pretentious political reformer, who is mainly interested in his own advancement. *Darwin* has further secured from the weak director an affidavit acknowledging the irregular transaction, and involving the elder *Emerson*, as well as the others.

In a skillfully contrived scene, which leads to several tense and holding situations, *Wilbur* makes it apparent that his main object now is to clear his fa-

ther, whose only mistake was in trusting him too much, and he is ready, if need be, to take all the blame himself. At any rate, as he avers, there is no need for five men to suffer if some plan can be devised by which one may shoulder the responsibility.

All this is brought out in a scene in the first act during the progress of a ball at the *Emersons'* home, and it is discovered further that *Katherine Darwin*, the wife of the prosecutor, was a childhood sweetheart of *Wilbur's*, and that her husband is still jealous of his unsuccessful rival. Moreover, it is apparent that *Katherine* has lost all faith in her husband's honesty of purpose. At his orders she leaves the *Emerson* household in the midst of the ball, her husband announcing that he is about to go to Washington on important political business. This leaves the stage free for the most impressive scene of the first act.

Secret Service men from across the way are watching the various men assembled in the *Emerson* library, and *Wilbur* suggests a card game to convey the impression of indifference. As the men take their places at the table, one of them asks what they are playing for. "For our liberties," says *Wilbur Emerson*.

And he then announces the danger that confronts them. But he insists that as he has secured the notes it will be possible to shift the responsibility for the irregularities to one of their number.

A game of cards in which *Wilbur* secures the fatal jack that is to determine the name of the victim, thereby saving his father from suffering the penalty, is the first climax of a scene that is steadily cumulative and exciting. Subsequently the discovery is made that the original notes have been stolen and copies substituted, and *Wilbur* in a tense and nervous scene obtains a confession from the traitor in the camp. It is now up to *Wilbur* to secure the stolen papers and the incriminating affidavit, and learning that they have been left at *Mr. Darwin's* home, he departs, announcing his intention of going there to get them.

In the second act, which continues the events of the same night and moves swiftly and with steadily developing interest, he forces his way into the prosecutor's library, to be discovered by *Mrs. Darwin* in the act of purloining the documents. At first she denounces him as a thief, and subsequently listens to his plea that he is only trying to save his father. But though she does not love her husband, she will not agree to sacrifice his interests by giving up the papers. She returns to her room, when *Wilbur*, about to leave the house, is surprised by the entrance of detectives who have been shadowing him, and by the subsequent arrival of *Darwin*.

A powerful scene follows between the two men, in which *Wilbur Emerson* attempts to clear *Mrs. Darwin* from suspicion, but the husband refuses to believe anything but the worst. Circumstantial evidence is certainly against the pair. The climactic situation comes in a scene a moment later in which the wife is put through a grilling cross-examination by the husband, who demands a full account of the night's proceedings. Failing to satisfy himself as to her innocence, he recalls *Wilbur*, who has temporarily left the room, and informs him that *Mrs. Darwin* is about to make a charge of burglary against him. Whereupon the wife, who has just made up her mind to deliver the papers to her husband, conceals them in her gown, and steadfastly refuses to be a party to the prosecution.

Upon the victim's withdrawal the husband makes repeated demands for a confession, the incidents leading up to "the big situation," in which *Mrs. Darwin*, worn out with nervous excitement, finally turns upon the inquisitor, denounces him for his insincerity and brutality, practically confesses to a wrong which she has really never committed, and triumphantly announces that it will at least be the means of freeing her from a husband who has no faith in her and whose rise in life has always been the result of the downfall of others.

It might seem that suspense would be dubious after this, but *Mr. Klein* has so

contrived that the successive steps are never obvious, and until the final curtain the issue remains in doubt.

The play is powerful in its effect, though there has been some issue taken as to the question of the ethics involved, since Mr. Klein creates sympathy for one who has been guilty of an infraction of the law. However, until all men are agreed as to what laws are just laws and that justice should never be tempered with mercy, this will not be an insurmountable obstacle to the good will of an audience.

And certainly the audience is with *Wilbur Emerson* and his interests, financial and sentimental, from the rising to the falling of the curtain, however much they may care to debate about it afterward.

"The Gamblers" engages an unusually fine company of strong and well-favored players. Mr. George Nash, overcoming many difficulties through the sheer force of sincere artistry, has repose, virility, and sympathetic attractiveness to make *Wilbur Emerson* an ingratiating figure. And no less successful along opposing lines is Mr. Charles Stevenson, whose portrait of the prosecutor is made real and convincing in spite of its unrelieved vindictiveness. Miss Jane Cowl, who plays the wife, has been generously praised by the critics for her sensitive playing and the force of the big climax, and Mr. William Mack, Mr. DeWitt Jennings, Mr. Cecil Kingstone, Mr. George Backus, Miss Edith Barker, and Miss Julia Hay are able members of a generally impressive cast.

A play of quite another kind was revealed in Mr. Thompson Buchanan's "The Cub," the fantastic irony of which came as an agreeable surprise to the first-night audience at the Comedy Theatre, where it followed a series of rather lugubrious attempts.

Mr. Buchanan is possibly the youngest of the new American playwrights, but this fact has not prevented him from having two or three successes to his credit, the first, "A Woman's Way," providing Miss Grace George with one of the best vehicles she has had.

In "The Cub," Mr. Buchanan pokes a lot of fun at those Kentucky mountaineers who persist in shooting each other up from time to time in pursuance of old grudges generally designated under the general head of feud. And as the author is himself a native of "the dark and bloody ground," and has served as a special correspondent at the seat of trouble, he writes with knowledge of his subject. He has not been content, however, to present a realistic drama of conditions, being engaged rather in showing the ridiculousness of such proceedings as result in loss of life over trivial cause for quarrel.

Steve Oldham, special correspondent of the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, assigned to report the feud, is the central figure of the play, and he gives the keynote to the satire in his speech: "Seventeen men killed in a feud which resulted from the loss of one sow valued at one dollar and eighty-seven cents. That makes each man worth eleven cents."

It takes some time for the mountaineers to get his point of view, but ultimately they do—in the play. And as a result, one of them, known as *Tombstone*, because he has never been known to smile, breaks into a loud guffaw, saves the situation, and incidentally the cub reporter's neck just when it is in most danger.

Steve Oldham, the youthful correspondent, who has little experience and less courage, arrives at Whitesburg, Letcher County, Kentucky, when hostility between "the Whites" and "the Renlows" is acute. The first person he encounters is the leader of the former faction, and it is made apparent to him that for safety's sake he had better ally himself with the Whites.

Subsequently, when he falls in love with a pretty school teacher who is related to the Renlows he sees the difficulty of his situation, and is involved in many complications by reason of it.

The love story is conventional enough, but Mr. Buchanan has invented a series of incidents of such a humorous nature that laughter is almost

incessant. He draws his figures with the boldness of caricature at times, but none too boldly for his purpose, which is to hold the feud spirit up to ridicule.

One of the most absurd scenes occurs in the last act where *Steve* is a captive in the cabin of the *Renlows*, the leader of that faction being a prisoner on the other side. He has sent word that if he is not released before daybreak *Steve* is to be hung, but in the meantime the boy shall be safe as long as he stays in bed. Jailer and prisoner, handcuffed together, retire for the night, and *Steve's* subsequent efforts to remain in bed are made excruciatingly funny.

The scene of a "truce dance" showing both factions and their friends during a period of agreed peace is another amusing episode carried through the greater part of one act, and here Mr. Buchanan visualizes some of the traits and customs of the mountain folk in an amusing and, probably, literal way.

There are, for example, two buckets of refreshments, one labeled "for women," the other "for men." That for the women contains lemonade, that for the men "moonshine whisky," and *Steve's* attempts to drink some of the raw concoction bring frequent coughing spells to him and laughing ones to the audience.

The play serves very well as a starring vehicle for Mr. Douglas Fairbanks, who has the ease and breeziness necessary to convey an impression of juvenile attractiveness, the while he has the skill to suggest the journalistic inexperience and personal timidity necessary to cover the points of the story. As it happens, *Steve Oldham* blunders into a settlement of the feud, but not until he has received word that he is too much of a "news faker" to satisfy his paper. But of course as he has won the right girl before that message comes, his discharge from duty does not worry him.

Others in a very capable assemblage of players are Millicent Evans, who makes an attractive heroine, Louise Rial, who plays a mountain woman col-

orfully, and Charles Stanley, Ernest Baxter, Joseph Greene, and Blanche Latell, who fill out other characters with good suggestions of the native peculiarities.

Two English players of great popularity in London, who appeared for a limited engagement in New York and whom readers of *AINSLIE'S* throughout the country will have an opportunity of seeing, are Fred Terry, a brother of Ellen Terry, and his wife, known professionally as Miss Julia Neilson. They appeared at the Knickerbocker in "*The Scarlet Pimpernel*," a flamboyant, romantic play, from the Baroness Orczy's novel of the same name, dramatized by herself and Montague Barstow.

The play takes its name from a little wayside flower which is used as a device by *Sir Percy Blakeney*, the English hero of the story, whose employment as a savior of aristocratic refugees from France during the Terror provides the melodramatic incidents of the story.

The best scene is the first, in which *Sir Percy*, disguised as an old woman, is seen driving a cart through the streets of Paris, mystifying the revolutionists and escaping with several refugees by playing on their fears and superstitions.

After that the action is carried to an English drawing room, where *Sir Percy* is shown at odds with his beautiful wife, played by Miss Neilson, who satisfies in respect to pulchritude rather more than by her histrionic accomplishments.

A snooping French spy succeeds in endangering her peace of mind through the discovery that her brother is in danger in Paris, and as the price of the boy's safety asks that the *Scarlet Pimpernel* be betrayed into his hands. Eventually *Lady Blakeney* is the means of endangering this heroic personage only to discover that he is her own husband, a fact which she had not previously suspected. How she saves him and how the pair are eventually reconciled provide material for the final act.



FOR BOOK LOVERS

FRANK DANBY'S determination, announced something like a year ago, to write no more fiction has not lasted so long as perhaps she expected it would; she has just published, through D. Appleton & Co., a new novel which she calls "Let the Roof Fall In."

Like her other books, the plot is very simple, but she manages to make it a story of over four hundred pages, all of them pretty well filled with dramatic action of the type called strong.

Though the scene is laid partly in England, it is an Irish story essentially, and the four principal characters are Irish. Derrick Malone is the hero, a sublimated sort of young man who impresses the reader as being almost too good. He exemplifies the truth—in fiction—be good and you'll be happy to an extent that most of us know little about in real life. He is a cousin of Terence Ranmore, Lord Ranmore, the best of "all the Ranmores, seventeen generations of them, and an epitome of the whole of Irish history." Terence has a fall in a steeplechase, and before his death confides to Derry the fact that Rosaleen O'Daly, the daughter of one of his mother's tenants, is in trouble, through him, and exacts a promise that Derry will look out for her. So to save the family name, Derry carries out his promise, when he succeeds Terence as the head of the family, by marrying Rosaleen.

The story is devoted to an account of the difficulty Lady Ranmore and the Duchess of Towcester, Terence's mother and sister, found in reconciling

this match with the family pride and traditions, and of Derry's suffering in consequence. If Rosaleen had not been a particularly lovable and adaptable young woman, Derry's reward of virtue might have been more realistic, but probably not nearly as satisfactory both to him and to the reader.



"Young Wallingford," by George Randolph Chester, published by the Bobbs-Merrill Company, is noteworthy because it gives the author a chance to exercise skill in the use of slang. Aside from this, the book is of little consequence.

We believe that it is compiled from a series of short stories which appeared in a magazine under the title of "Get Rich Quick Wallingford," and from which a play of the same name has been constructed.

Young Wallingford, the finished product, is the development of Jonathan Reuben Wix, the juvenile town gambler, in a small city twenty-four hours from Broadway, possibly in Indiana or Illinois. He is, by birth and breeding, the local confidence man, and by the time he is ready to graduate from the training school and take up his work in the larger world he is, of course, more than a match for New York disciples of Hungry Joe; if he weren't, there would be no story.

The hero constantly protests that he proposes to keep within the law. The reader, at times, is sensible of some confusion of ideas in attempting to follow the author's distinctions between

Daw's criminality and Wallingford's innocence; but possibly it is considered sufficient to say, as Mr. Chester does, that his hero is uniformly guiltless.

A few chapters of the book make fairly entertaining reading; the balance is ineffably tiresome.



"Further adventures of Arsène Lupin" are contained in Maurice Leblanc's story of "The Hollow Needle," published by Doubleday, Page & Co. It is a French mystery story in all that the phrase implies, though it must be conceded that it lacks the convincing ingenuity that distinguishes the best French tales of this type.

Nevertheless it is, on the whole, sufficiently interesting to carry one through to the climax without a great deal of effort. Its beginning is promising, with the murder in the old chateau of the Comte De Gesvres, the confusion into which the household is thrown, the mysterious disappearance of the criminals, of whom there appear to be three or four, the prompt response of the police, and the keen analysis of the situation by the youthful prodigy, Isidore Beautrelet.

But having staged the mystery, introduced the characters, and evolved circumstances which point to Arsène Lupin as the director of the tragedy, Monsieur Leblanc begins to falter in the development of the plot. Lupin is brought within reach of the law's arm a half a dozen times, but no attempt is made to capture him, and he is allowed to escape without explanation. The mystery of the hollow needle is introduced and becomes the subject of investigation by Beautrelet wholly to the exclusion of the original mystery. So that the plot breaks in two in the midst of the story.

As a story, it is decidedly not a success, but the reader's interest will doubtless be sufficiently stimulated to carry him through to the explanation of the ancient stronghold on the Norman coast, the treasury of Caesar and his successors.

A volume of short stories by Gouverneur Morris under the title "The Spread Eagle" is published by Charles Scribner's Sons. Following an established but somewhat inexplicable custom, the first story takes its title from the book, or vice versa; it is a matter of small importance, perhaps, one way or the other, except that it throws some light upon the rather happy-go-lucky purpose which prompts the collection of short stories in a dollar-and-a-half book and affords a contrast with the methods of the late O. Henry.

"The Spread Eagle" is the not altogether unheard-of story of the American boy, the son of a captain of industry, who is not permitted to depend upon his father's wealth, but carves out a career for himself, and is rewarded by the beauty of Newport. Even the least captious critic will admit that it smells of moth balls.

By far the best story of the collection is "Mr. Holiday." If you want a real Christmas story and a Christmas story unlike anything of the kind that you ever read before, here it is. In this Mr. Morris is at his best. He has characters with whom he is in complete sympathy, his lively imagination is under just restraint, and he has succeeded in infusing into his tale the spirit and atmosphere of the theme. Besides this the other twelve stories seem rather commonplace.



Meredith Nicholson's new book, "The Siege of the Seven Suitors," is published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

It has a rather discouraging title, and the story itself does not altogether dissipate the sensations that the title produces. One cannot help feeling that the tale ought to be much better than it is. Miss Hollister is, potentially, a character intensely interesting and attractive, as a well-bred, elderly, enterprising spinster always is. She has plenty of vitality and a keen sympathy with life, a perfectly reasonable curiosity about other people, with a faculty for manag-

ing their affairs, all tempered with a sense of humor. But she needs a wise, skillful, and understanding interpreter.

She is really not merely the dominating character of the book, but it is actually she who weaves the plot. She imposes the conditions upon Cecilia Hollister's suitors; she manipulates and directs Ames, and she orders the outcome.

She therefore should be left to herself to carry on the action of the story, but she is not allowed to do any such thing. Mr. Nicholson himself is the active personality. He tells her what to do and what to say, and she acts and talks according to instructions; she is never spontaneous, as such women always are. You never get away from the conviction that she is being made to pose by some one else.

So you shortly lose your interest in her and transfer it languidly to the rest. You are not particularly interested in what is going to happen, because you know all about it, almost from the beginning. It must have been a strain to write it; it certainly is to read it.



A. E. W. Mason has given us a real mystery story in "The Villa Rose," which is just published by Charles Scribner's Sons.

The seasoned reader of detective fiction knows perfectly well, when he takes up one of these stories, that at the outset circumstances will bring under suspicion a person who finally turns out to be perfectly innocent. Only too often he is irritated by the transparency of the trick, though he may still have sufficient interest to want to find the real criminal.

Mr. Mason has not disdained to make use of this device in his story, but he has handled his characters and the circumstances of his plot so skillfully and entertainingly that no reader is likely to find fault.

The murder of Madame Dauvray at the Villa Rose in Aix, the facts developed as to her household, her interest

in spiritualistic manifestations, the antecedents of the young English girl, Cecilia, and the character of her maid, Hélène Vauquier, all combine to give the tale a most promising start on its journey.

The detective, Hanaud, is a very convincing police officer of the French school, and does his work promptly and thoroughly. Mr. Mason has succeeded in masking his criminals so effectively that the reader is kept in a most pleasant state of excited speculation until the revelation comes. And when the explanation is finally made it seems the most reasonable thing in the world. It is the daring of the criminals that shields them from the suspicion of the reader, and if M. Hanaud had been less familiar with their methods they might have escaped him, after all.

Nearly half of the book is devoted to the detective's explanation to Mr. Ricardo of how the murder was committed and of the clues he sought and obtained and followed. Long explanations of this sort are usually rather tiresome, but Mr. Mason succeeds in holding the interest he has stimulated to the very end.



Important New Books.

"The Annals of Ann," Kate Trimble Sharber, Bobbs-Merrill Co.

"Tama," Onoto Watana, Harper & Bros.

"Nightshale," Paul Gwynne, Brentano's.

"The Paternoster Ruby," Charles E. Walk, A. C. McClurg & Co.

"The Little King," Charles Major, Macmillan Co.

"Angela's Quest," Lillian Bell, Duffield & Co.

"The Bird in the Box," Mary Mears, Frederick A. Stokes Co.

"The End of Dreams," Wood Levette Wilson, Mitchell Kennerley.

"The Book of Friendship," Samuel M. Crothers, Macmillan Co.

"Phoebe and Ernest," Inez Haynes Gillmore, Henry Holt & Co.

"The Empty House," Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

"Princess Flower Hat," Mabel Osgood Wright, Macmillan Co.

"Opal," Bessie R. Hoover, Harper & Bros.

"The Flint Heart," Eden Phillpotts, E. P. Dutton & Co.

"Grover Cleveland," Richard Watson Gilder, Century Co.

Talks With Ainslee's Readers

DID you ever stop to think what it means to make up a number of a magazine like AINSLEE'S? Probably not. You read it every month, and your continued support proves that you find it good, and are naturally satisfied to let it go at that. You are interested chiefly in results; we all are; we don't inquire very closely into causes. We receive a wireless dispatch and we are pleased, and some of us, perhaps, indulge ourselves in mild wonder at the miracle of sending messages through the air, but the fact that we get the message is enough; we don't inquire any further. But if a dispatch for which we have paid goes astray, we are apt to ask for reasons.

So you pay fifteen cents for AINSLEE'S every four weeks, and at least get your money's worth, and take it as a matter of course. But suppose, instead of that, you found in your magazine each month a dozen or more sentimental love episodes, a complete novel, and a serial of the same sort, what would be your sensations? Wouldn't you begin to speculate about reasons?—if you weren't too much irritated.

It isn't actually so easy as it looks, this matter of putting together a table of contents for AINSLEE'S. It means getting infinite variety combined in substantial unity, giving you a lot of stories that don't resemble each other in the least, but all of which shall be alive, shall make you feel the human nature in them.

It requires an instinct, a sixth sense, if you please, to do this, aided and abetted by a lavish expenditure of money. The publishers of AINSLEE'S cultivate the sixth sense, and don't hesitate to back it up with their money.

WHAT do you think of the idea of reprinting some of O. Henry's stories which have never appeared in book form? Some one suggested it to us—some one who happened to know that the first stories O. Henry—acknowledged to have been the

greatest American writer of short stories—ever wrote appeared in AINSLEE'S—and suggested it so forcibly that we had to think it over. At first the idea didn't appeal to us very seriously because AINSLEE'S has never published anything but new and original material.

But our friend was insistent; he ridiculed the objection we made, and reminded us that strict adherence to a precedent was slavish, and that omission to do something simply because you never have done it is weak and foolish. He seemed to think that you people who read AINSLEE'S were the ones to be considered, and that you would be immensely tickled to have such a chance.

So we agreed to make the experiment, and we are going to republish in the February number the very first story that O. Henry ever wrote.

We want to hear from you about it. "Money Maze," it is hardly necessary to say, is a story which, of itself, is as interesting as a story can be. It ought to have an added interest for you because it is O. Henry's first story. If you like this idea, and want to see his second and third stories reprinted in AINSLEE'S, write to us.

THE request that we have made in these talks that you would write us freely about AINSLEE'S has brought us a perfect flood of letters. We hoped that some of you would feel moved to respond, but we were not prepared for what we feel justified in calling an uprising.

You have shown so much interest in this that each of you will be glad, we are sure, to hear what the others have to say, so we append here extracts from a few of the scores of letters that have come to us.

"It is such a satisfaction to lay down a magazine and feel glad that you have made its acquaintance—so glad that you go out and enthuse over it to your friends. I have induced over a dozen friends to take your

publication regularly merely from my enthusiastic boosting."

"There are no better stories in any other publication than in AINSLEE'S October and November, and I am a short story and magazine lady fiend."

"It is no strain to say that I can't conceive of how there *could* be a better story than 'Viviette.'"

"I like AINSLEE'S fiction because your writers say what they have to say in simple language without going round a forty-acre ranch to display their powers of description."

"If Louise Closser Hale can write more stories up to the grade of 'Behind Their Masques,' you would do well to get them."

"AINSLEE'S short stories are of a class that no other magazine has ever been able to attain."

"I have to thank you for all the enjoyment I derive from your magazine. I really don't know what I should do without it, and only wish it was published oftener."

"In the November AINSLEE'S you have two fine stories in 'Nellie and Marcus Aurelius' and 'The Thoroughbred Strain.'"

"I am anxiously waiting for the December number to finish that fascinating story, 'The Golden Web.'"

"For business reasons I follow the leading magazines, and of all the stories I have read, Locke's 'Viviette' seems to me the most promising."

"I consider 'The Golden Web' by far the best reading I have found."

"'Nellie and Marcus Aurelius' is as wholesome and refreshing as a summer morning."



NOW, this is fine; we like it. Naturally we like it because these letters show that you are pleased with us; but we like it still more—and we say it in all sincerity—because we interpret these letters as the beginning of a genuine and comfortable intimacy between you and AINSLEE'S. Hitherto the acquaintance has been a one-sided one; you have had a chance to find out a good deal about us, for if you will stop to think a moment, you will see that we can't edit and publish a magazine month after month without putting into it something of our own

characters, and so after a while you get a pretty clear idea of what sort of persons we are. But while you have been storing up your knowledge of us we haven't been getting acquainted with you at all. You have been to us that rather vague and, to the editorial mind, terrifying personality, "the reading public," a mysterious power that must be appeased in some way.

Now, we want to know you in some other way than through the circulation department. We are as fond of human companionship as the next one, and there is nothing more satisfactory than a conversation between friends. We have made a good beginning, and now let's keep it up. You've got a good deal more to say, and all you have to do is to say it, just as freely as you want to.



THE GOLDEN WEB" is finished, much to your regret, if we may judge by what you have said and written to us about it. We rather think that those of you who have raised objection to continued stories have modified, even if you have not actually changed, your opinions on the subject, after reading Mr. Partridge's absorbing tale.

We are hopefully anticipating your commendation of the story by Agnes and Egerton Castle, which begins in this number. All of you remember, of course, "The Pride of Jennico" and "The Bath Comedy," for these two books were probably the most widely read novels ten years ago, and they were the basis of two wonderfully successful plays.

"The Panther's Cub" is the best work Mr. and Mrs. Castle have done since those two great successes, and if you are not pleased with it we shall be very much surprised as well as disappointed. In any event, tell us how you feel about it.

The February number will have, besides the second installment of this story, another short story by Margaretta Tuttle, "The Shadow of the Waste Places." Some of you wrote us, after reading her story, "The Greatest of These," in the September number, that you would buy AINSLEE'S just to read her stories, so we are giving you a chance to make good. You have one in this number; there will be one in the February number, and another in the March number.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE (ENGLAND)

THIRD ANNOUNCEMENT

in regard to the NEW
11th EDITION of the

Encyclopædia Britannica

¶ As is generally known, the Encyclopædia Britannica was first published when this country was a British colony—that is, in 1768–71.

¶ The novel and convenient plan upon which it was built—the whole body of human knowledge being arranged under alphabetical headings—appealed immediately to the public, and the work has since occupied a position of supremacy among books of reference from which it has never been displaced. The Encyclopædia Britannica has, indeed, been the pattern and the basis upon which all other encyclopædias—in German and French as well as in English—have been edited.

¶ The last edition which was completely new was the Ninth, published by A.&C.Black (Edinburgh and London) between 1875 and 1889.



(From an actual photograph)
India paper edition of the new Encyclopædia
Britannica in the portable oak trough
—width of books 28 inches.

¶ The University of Cambridge is now about to bring out the New (Eleventh) Edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica in 28 volumes and Index, being an absolutely new and authoritative survey of universal knowledge as it stands in 1910.

¶ The entire work has been edited as a complete whole and not volume by volume as in the past, and part of the first impression, which is now in the press, is being printed on India paper (very light and opaque), greatly reducing the bulk and weight of the books, making them easy to handle and, therefore, easier to read than in the case of any previous edition.

¶ The sum of £230,000 (\$1,150,000) has been expended on the New (Eleventh) Edition, this being the sum paid to editors and contributors, as well as for plates, illustrations, maps, type-setting, corrections, etc., before a copy was offered for sale. For the Ninth Edition less than half of this sum was similarly expended.

The ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA (11th Edition)

¶ Of the Ninth Edition there were sold in Great Britain and the British colonies 82,000 sets in its genuine or authorized form, and in this country 50,000 sets, besides over 300,000 sets of a mutilated and incomplete American reprint. All of these are now out of date and will be superseded by the New (Eleventh) Edition.

¶ In view of the fact that no completely new edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica has been issued for more than 20 years, it is anticipated that the demand for the New (Eleventh) Edition will far exceed that for the Ninth, and also that the demand will be immediate.

¶ The printing and binding of so large a work (29 volumes, 27,000 pages, 40,000,000 words) at one time will be without precedent in publishing, and the publishers are at the moment unable to tell to what extent the public will prefer the volumes printed on India paper, as it involves a complete revolution in the usual format of large works of reference.

¶ It was, therefore, decided that at first it would be inadvisable to print more than a small number of copies (these being now almost completed) and that before concluding manufacturing contracts for a large edition a preliminary offer of the work at a low price should be made before publication and without any payments by subscribers, in order to ascertain in which form the public

will prefer to subscribe—whether for the India paper impression (each volume to be less than an inch in thickness) or for the ordinary paper impression (the volumes to be $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches in thickness), and for which of the six styles of bindings.

¶ It is necessary to obtain this information in order to place manufacturing orders for printing, paper, and binding materials on a large scale, with a view to saving at least 20 per cent. of the cost of production.

¶ The decision to print a small first edition was based on essentially practical grounds. Any business man who considers the matter will readily understand how important it is that it should be known in advance whether the majority of subscribers will order the volumes on India or on ordinary paper.* The employment of this kind of paper for a work of 28 volumes and Index is a radical departure in publishing. The offer of the New (Eleventh) Edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica is world-wide and 500,000 book buyers



Reduced photograph to show the comparative size of the volumes of the Old Edition and of the New (11th) Edition on India paper, in the single-tier mahogany bookstand.

* Out of the first 1000 orders received in England, where the advance offer was made somewhat earlier than in the United States, 925 were for the India paper edition.

AN ENORMOUS BOOK IN A HANDY FORMAT

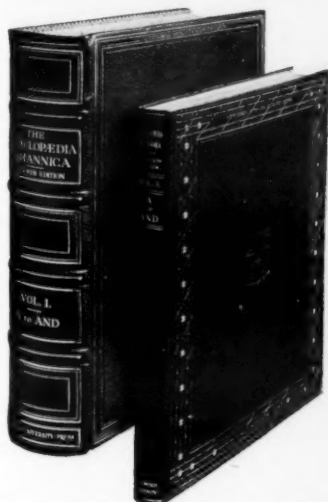
have been notified. Should only 100,000 sets be printed on India paper there would be required over six million pounds of this paper. If this estimate of the demand were too high by 10 per cent. it would mean that 600,000 pounds of paper would be wasted. The supply of India paper is limited; it costs in the London market a shilling, or 25 cents, a pound. It will be apparent that all possibility of selling the Encyclopædia Britannica Eleventh Edition at a profit would be swept away unless the preliminary estimates were correct. The manufacturing problem is more difficult in the case of the binding, because the purchase of leather runs into even more money.

¶ If the Eleventh Edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica is to be sold at a reasonable price, it must be manufactured at low cost—that is, in large editions. If it is to be manufactured at low cost, it must be known approximately in what proportions the public will call for each kind of paper and each style of binding. These percentages can only be ascertained by an offer in advance of publication, and this is the purpose of the present announcement.

¶ *A comparatively few sets for the United States and an equal number for Great Britain are now being printed, most of which are on India paper. When this announcement went to the printer the response of the public had already begun, and the indications were that the advance subscriptions would account for all the sets now being printed and many more.*

¶ Whenever, in the opinion of the Cambridge University Press, the percentages are definitely enough ascertained to determine the demand for the work in its two forms and six styles of bindings, the prices will be advanced—*without notice if necessary*. It will be necessary, very soon, to place applicants on a waiting list, delivery of the volumes to be made as soon as the paper can be produced and the volumes printed and bound, but each subscriber's name will be registered and each set delivered according to the date of application as indicated by the postmark. From this rule there will be no departure.

¶ *The Encyclopædia Britannica, Eleventh Edition, is now offered direct to the public and not through book-agents or canvassers.*



The Old Format (2½ inches thick) and the New (less than an inch thick) on India paper.



The use of India paper makes a light, slender, flexible volume, which may be doubled back, held in one hand, and read with ease and comfort, as this photograph shows.

TEMPORARY PRICES AND TERMS

upon which Advance Subscriptions are now being accepted (at a substantial concession in the price) for the

NEW ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA (11th Edition)

published by the

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE (England)

The New (11th) Edition of this Celebrated Work is a Fresh and Original Survey of Human Thought, Learning and Achievement to the Year 1910. A Small Edition is now being printed, and the first copies will soon be ready for delivery. The work, in 28 volumes and Index, will be in two forms:—

- (1) On INDIA PAPER (very light and opaque) in Three Styles of Binding: CLOTH, FULL FLEXIBLE SHEEPSKIN, and FULL FLEXIBLE MOROCCO, the volumes to be LESS THAN AN INCH THICK (about 960 pages).

The India paper impression bound in either Full Sheep or Full Morocco is strongly recommended.

- (2) On ordinary book-paper in Three Styles of Binding: CLOTH, HALF MOROCCO, and FULL MOROCCO, the volumes to be 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches thick (about 960 pages).

\$4.00 a volume for Ordinary paper, bound in Cloth

This is little more than half the price (30s. or \$7.50 a volume) at which the Ninth Edition was sold when first issued, although the number of pages in each volume is larger by 100, the number of articles in the whole work by 23,000, the number of contributors by 400, and the body of information by at least 100 per cent.

The slight additional cost (25 cents) for the India paper volumes is not in proportion to actual market valuations, as it is well known that books printed on India paper are always sold at high prices.

To be increased to \$7.50 a volume

It is intended that after the publication of the work, the price shall be increased, and this increase will be made at any time after the purpose of the present offer (see preceding pages) has been achieved, and the work will ultimately be sold at the regular price of 30s. or \$7.50 a volume (cloth).

Payment after Delivery

No money need accompany advance subscriptions, nor will any payment fall due until the volumes have been delivered.

Terms of Payment

After delivery, the cash price (at the special rate of \$4.00 a volume for ordinary paper, and \$4.25 a volume for India paper) may be paid in full, or at a slight increase may be divided into 4, 8, or 12 monthly payments. Payment will also be accepted in monthly instalments of \$5.00 only.

Number of Early Sets Available

Before proceeding with the manufacture of a large number of copies, the publishers wish to ascertain approximately the relative demand for the work in its two forms and six styles of bindings (see three previous pages), and until this information has been secured only a small number of sets will be printed and bound. The first subscription list will, it is expected, account for all the sets already in process of manufacture. Subscribers whose applications are entered on this list will be placed on a basis of preferential treatment, that is, will receive the large concession in price above explained.

Those who prefer the India paper impression are particularly urged not to delay their applications, as the preparation of the sets in this form is a slow process.

NOTE.—The new ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA is now offered direct to the public, and no book-agents or canvassers are employed.

APPLICATION FOR THE PROSPECTUS

Full particulars of prices (in advance of publication), of deferred payments, bookcases and bindings, together with a prospectus containing an account of the work, with specimen pages, order form, &c., free upon application.

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS (Encyclopædia Britannica Department), 35 WEST 32D ST., N.Y.

Please send me the prospectus of the new ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA (11th Edition).

Name

Profession or Business (with address)

Residence

NOTE.—Those who possess copies of previous editions of the ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA (now out of date) are requested to advise us of the fact, clearly indicating which edition, name of publisher, number of volumes, etc., and, if they wish to purchase the new edition, will be informed how they can dispose of their old editions at a fair valuation.

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right kind of

NOURISHMENT

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The EDISON PHONOGRAPH



IN 1911

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You want the instrument with the sensitive wax cylinder records that have a musical tone far beyond that of other records; the one equipped with a sapphire reproducing point that never needs changing; the one with a subdued volume of sound, suited to the home; the one that plays Amberol (four-minute) Records, giving all the music of any selection without cutting

or hurrying, and the one that permits of home record making—the most fascinating feature ever offered by an amusement machine.

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There is an Edison Phonograph at a price to suit everybody's means, from the Gem at \$15.00 to the Amberola at \$200.00. Ask your dealer for complete catalogs of Edison Phonographs and Records, or write us.

Edison Standard Records	35c.
Edison Amberol Records (play twice as long)	50c.
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No Rim-Cutting

The picture shows how a Goodyear No-Rim-Cut tire fits any standard rim for quick-detachable tires. Also demountable rims.

Note that the rim flanges, which are removable, are turned to hook outward with No-Rim-Cut tires. There are no hooks on the base to hook into the rim, as there are on other tires. The rounded flange comes next to the tire casing, and rim-cutting is made impossible.

The next picture shows how other tires—clinchers—fit this same rim. The rim flanges are turned to face inward—to grasp hold of the hook in the tire. That is how the tires are held on.

Note how that thin edge of the rim flange digs into the tire. That is what causes rim-cutting. A tire



The Cause of Rim-Cutting

may be ruined beyond repair in a single block, if you run it flat.

The difference is this: Goodyear No-Rim-Cut tires don't need to be hooked to the rim. Through the base on each side we run 63 braided wires—a feature which we control.

These wires make the base unstretchable. When the tire is inflated the wires contract. A pressure of 134 pounds to the inch then holds the tire to the rim.

Other makers, to get rid of this hook, use a single wire or a hard rubber base. But both are impracticable. The braided wires, which contract under air pressure, are absolutely essential to a safe hookless tire.

In addition to this, Goodyear No-Rim-Cut tires are 10 per cent over the rated size. That means 10 per cent more tire at no extra cost. With the average car that adds 25 per cent to the tire mileage, because it avoids overloading.

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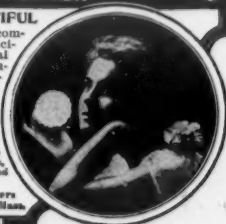
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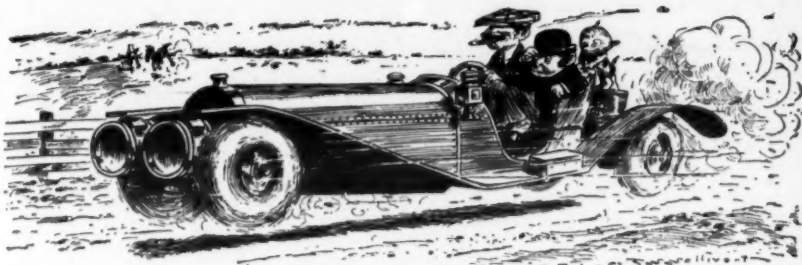
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AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE

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Fiction Competition For November

THE responses to our offer of prizes, made in the November number, for the opinions of our readers as to what they considered the best stories in the November magazines, were gratifying, beyond the hopes of the publishers.

The number of the letters we received exceeded by almost one hundred per cent. what we believed we were justified in expecting. This fact alone is a matter for congratulation because it shows that there is, among the readers of AINSLEE'S, a broad and vital interest in good fiction. In this respect quantity counts for much.

But besides this, the letters, all of which were carefully read, showed such intelligent appreciation and sound critical discrimination as to make them of almost inestimable value as a guide to the tastes and wants of the reading public. There was shown, also, a remarkable independence in the expression of opinion, the thing above all others that we have sought.

The chief, if not the only object of the publishers, is to secure from their readers their absolutely unbiased views. A frank criticism of AINSLEE'S gives its author as good a chance for a prize as any other.

The prizes have been awarded as follows:

First Prize of \$50.00 to

LAURA ALTHEA HILL, San Marcos, Texas.

Second Prize of \$30.00 to

FREDA SUMMERFIELD, Chicago, Ill.

Third Prize of \$20.00 to

OTTO NEEDHAM FRANKFORT, Anamosa, Iowa.

Notice of another competition is to be found elsewhere in the advertising pages.



Pinehurst

NORTH CAROLINA

The Center of Winter Out-of-Door Life in the Middle South

FREE FROM CLIMATIC EXTREMES
AND WHOLESOME IN EVERY RESPECT

FOUR EXCELLENT HOTELS
FIFTY COTTAGES

HOLLY INN—Now Open CAROLINA—Opens January 7th
BERKSHIRE—Opens January 14th HARVARD

The only resort having Three 18-hole Golf Courses, all in pink of condition, Country Club, 40,000 Acre Private Shooting Preserve, Good Guides and Trained Dogs, Fine Livery of Saddle Horses, Model Dairy, Tennis Courts, Trap Shooting, etc.

NO CONSUMPTIVES RECEIVED AT PINEHURST

Through Pullman Service from New York to Pinehurst via Seaboard Air Line. Only one night out from New York, Boston, Cleveland, Pittsburg and Cincinnati. Don't fail to send to nearest railroad offices for literature, illustrating the out-of-door features of PINEHURST and giving full details of attractions.

Send for Illustrated Literature and List of Golf, Tennis and Shooting Tournaments.

PINEHURST GENERAL OFFICE: PINEHURST, NORTH CAROLINA
or LEONARD TUFTS, Owner, Boston, Mass.

A LIVING FROM POULTRY

\$1,500.00 from 60 Hens in Ten Months on a City Lot 40 Feet Square

TO the average poultry-man that would seem impossible, and when we tell you that we have actually done a \$1500 poultry business with 60 hens on a corner in the city garden 40 feet wide by 40 feet long, we are simply stating facts. It would not be possible to get such returns by any one of the systems of poultry keeping recommended and practiced by the American people, still it can be accomplished by the



Note the condition of these three months old pullets. These pullets and their ancestors for seven generations have never been allowed to run outside the coop.

PHILO SYSTEM

THE PHILO SYSTEM IS UNLIKE ALL OTHER WAYS OF KEEPING POULTRY

and in many respects just the reverse, accomplishing things in poultry work that have always been considered impossible, and getting unheard-of results that are hard to believe without seeing.

THE NEW SYSTEM COVERS ALL BRANCHES OF THE WORK NECESSARY FOR SUCCESS

from selecting the breeders to marketing the product. It tells how to get eggs that will hatch, how to hatch nearly every egg and how to raise nearly all the chicks hatched. It gives complete plans in detail how to make everything necessary to run the business and at less than half the cost required to handle the poultry business in any other manner.

TWO-POUND BROILERS IN EIGHT WEEKS

are raised in a space of less than a square foot to the broiler, and the broilers are of the very best quality, bringing here 8 cents a pound above the highest market price.

OUR SIX-MONTH-OLD PULLETS ARE LAYING AT THE RATE OF 24 EGGS EACH PER MONTH

in a space of two square feet for each bird. No green cut bone of any description is fed, and the food used is inexpensive as compared with food others are using.

Our new book, *The Philo System of Poultry Keeping*, gives full particulars regarding these wonderful discoveries, with simple, easy-to-understand directions that are right to the point, and 15 pages of illustrations showing all branches of the work from start to finish.

DON'T LET THE CHICKS DIE IN THE SHELL

One of the secrets of success is to save all the chickens that are fully developed at hatching time, whether they can crack the shell or not. It is a simple trick, and believed to be the secret of the ancient Egyptians and Chinese which enabled them to sell the chicks at 10 cents a dozen.

CHICKEN FEED AT FIFTEEN CENTS A BUSHEL

Our book tells how to make the best green food with but little trouble and have a good supply any day in the year, winter or summer. It is just as impossible to get a large egg yield without green food as it is to keep a cow without hay or fodder.

OUR NEW BROODER SAVES 2 CENTS ON EACH CHICKEN

No lamp required. No danger of chilling, over-heating or burning up the chickens as with brooders using lamps or any kind of fire. They also keep the lice off the chickens automatically or kill any that may be on them when placed in the brooder. Our book gives full plans and the right to make and use them. One can easily be made in an hour at a cost of 25 to 50 cents.

TESTIMONIAL

South Britain, Conn., April 19, 1909

Mr. E. R. Philo, Elmira, N. Y.

Dear Sir:—I have followed your system as close as I could; the result is a complete success. If there can be any improvement on nature, your brooder is it. The first experience I had with your System was last December. I hatched 17 chicks under two hens, put them as soon as hatched in one of your brooders out of doors and at the age of three months I sold them at 85c. a pound. They then averaged 2½ lbs. each, and the man I sold them to said they were the finest he ever saw and he wants all I can spare this season. Yours truly,

A. E. Nelson.

SPECIAL OFFER

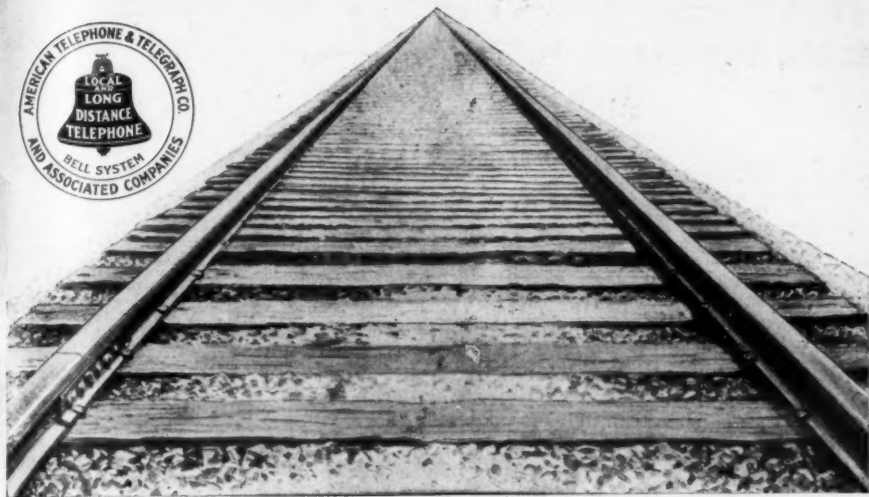
Send \$1.00 for one year's subscription to the *Poultry Review*, a monthly magazine devoted to progressive methods of poultry keeping, and we will include, without charge, a copy of the latest revised edition of the *Philo System Book*.



Photograph Showing a Portion of the Philo National Poultry Institute Poultry Plant, Where There are now Over 5,000 Pedigree White Orpingtons on Less Than a Half Acre of Land.

E. R. PHILO, Publisher
2552 Lake St., Elmira, N. Y.

Tell the subscriber: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



"The Clear Track"

Two men a thousand miles apart talk to each other by telephone without leaving their desks.

Two wires of copper form the track over which the talk travels from point to point throughout a continent.

Moving along one railroad track at the same time are scores of trains carrying thousands of passengers. The telephone track must be

clear from end to end to carry the voice of one customer.

The Bell system has more than ten million miles of wire and reaches over five million telephones. This system is operated by a force of one hundred thousand people and makes seven billion connections a year—twenty million "clear tracks" a day for the local and long distance communication of the American people.

***The efficiency of the Bell system depends upon
"One System, One Policy, Universal Service."***

**AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY
AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES**

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



Bon Ami

For Mirrors and Glassware

Thousands of housewives use Bon Ami for cleaning mirrors, windows and glassware.

Nothing else equals it for this purpose.

Bon Ami is applied as a thin lather and removed when dry, leaving a clean, transparent, sparkling surface. It is all done in a minute.

Bon Ami also polishes brass and nickel, and cleans wood-

work, porcelain, kitchenware and floors.

It will not hurt the finest article nor roughen the hands.

Use Bon Ami to clean, scour and polish. It insures real cleanliness and brightness everywhere.

20 years on the market, "Hasn't scratched yet"



Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

Swift's Premium Calendar for 1911

"The Courtships of American Poetry"

Four large, beautiful pictures 10x15 inches, in 13 colors, that everyone will prize—

**Hiawatha and Minnehaha
Maud Muller and the Judge**

**Priscilla and John Alden
Evangeline and Gabriel**

This charming calendar depicts the courtships of the four most famous romances of American Poetry—dear to every American as typical of the sweethearts of long ago. The scenes are historically correct, with all the quaint surroundings and costumes of the period. These fine pictures are taken from celebrated paintings and below each is a suitable quotation from the poem. There is no advertising on them to prevent framing. Sent prepaid for

**10 cents, coin or stamps,
or—one cap from a jar of Swift's Beef Extract,
or—10 Wool Soap Wrappers.**
(In Canada 10 cents additional is required on account of duty)

Swift's Premium Hams and Bacon

have passed another year of favor with the housewife because of their high quality and mild, delicious flavor. When you order be sure to say "Swift's Premium" and you will get the best the market affords. At all dealers.

For Calendars, address
Swift & Company
4102 Packers' Ave.

**Chicago,
U. S. A.**



EVANGELINE AND GABRIEL

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29	13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31



MAUD MULLER AND THE JUDGE

JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31



HIAWATHA AND MINNEHAHA

SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30



PRISCILLA AND JOHN ALDEN

DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29

Sixteenth Year

U. S. Serial No 3208 "Quarantined under the Food and Drugs Act June 30, 1906"

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POSTUM

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"Here's to
another year
—and years
and years of
Steady Nerves
Clear Brains
and Vigorous
Health"

Every year more people quit coffee and use

1895 **POSTUM** 1911

"There's a Reason"

Postum Cereal Co., Ltd., Battle Creek, Mich., U.S.A.